

On the Conveyor Belt to Death By JOHN STRACHEY

new

NOVEMBER 12, 1935

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Masses

Chain Gang Governor

An Interview with Talmadge of Georgia

By
JOSEPH NORTH

Where Smedley Butler Stands

By WALTER WILSON

The Radio's Role as Red-Baiter

By J. R. ATKINS

The Outlook for the Labor Party

By CARL REEVE

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new Masses

NOVEMBER 12, 1935

Stakhanovism

IT IS only two and a half months since Stakhanov, until then an obscure young Soviet miner, leaped into opulence and fame by demonstrating how the automatic hammer, handled by an efficient worker, could increase productivity from the "normal" average of seven tons in a six-hour shift to what then seemed the fantastic figure of three hundred and ten tons (with the aid of two proppers). Since then another miner in the Don Basin has increased (October 28) the output to four hundred and five tons and he declared before a meeting of 1,500 cheering miners who waited for him outside the mine that 405 tons was just a beginning and that his immediate objective was 500 tons! The "technical norm" has been beaten to a frazzle. All over the vast Soviet Union, in numerous different industries, thousands of heroes of labor—the socialist equivalent of the Herculeases, Hectors and Sir Galahads of old—have risen in response to Stakhanov's call. Originating at the bottom and encouraged from the top, "Stakhanovism" has burgeoned forth into a mighty movement for the mastery of technique, the mastery of the machine, squeezing everything out of socialist industry that socialist industry has to offer.

THE fact that the average Stakhanovist earns twice, three times or even ten times as much as he did by the old methods, while of course important, is in the majority of cases a secondary consideration. It is the sense of achievement, of conquest and mastery, that provides the main impetus. From the outset Stakhanovism has not been merely an economic phenomenon: it has fired the imagination, moral fervor and even, it seems, the aesthetic sense of the masses. Stakhanovism has become synonymous with daring, vigor, efficiency, precision, neatness, cleanliness, punctuality, devotion. To speak of it, as press dispatches have within the past week, as a "speedup" is ignorant and malicious twaddle which can only emanate from bourgeois scribes who by their position and the very nature of their work, cannot get



ALL IS FORGIVEN

Russell T. Limbach

within miles of the Soviet masses, cannot feel their pulse.

THESE bourgeois gentlemen think in concepts and categories they have brought with them from their world of private ownership and capitalist exploitation. They cannot and will not even vaguely envisage the pathos, grandeur and hope for humanity contained in such outbursts of revolutionary energy as are embodied in a phenomenon like Stakhanovism. Small people, petty spirits, cynics, ghosts of a dying world, they cannot or do not wish to fathom the great joy which the Soviet worker who has fought, suffered and sacrificed to build his machines now derives from pressing the most out of them. And

there is nothing to spoil that joy—no fear of pushing fellow workers into the horrors of unemployment, no gnawing feeling of being exploited and of helping to pile up fortunes for some idle parasite, no dread of himself being thrown on the scrap heap when the market is glutted with the goods he so speedily produces, no doubt as to the attitude of the class-conscious workers who labor by his side. Of course the hidden enemy of the working class, the remnant of the capitalist past who cannot reconcile himself to the thought of the worker working for himself, he fulminates and may shoot from his ambush; but that is no deterrent for the Soviet worker, it acts as a further stimulus to greater effort. The Soviet

worker knows that if he produces more and the next worker produces more and the third and fourth—they will all have more, their wives and children will have more, the whole country will have more. He knows he is working for an abundance of cultured life. Let those gentlemen who sneer and malign mention another spot in the world where the worker, however good his work, can attain the glory and renown of a Stakhanov, Busygin, Vinogradova, Dechenko or Izotov. One can think of no more appropriate gift that the Soviet workers could give the international proletariat on the eighteenth anniversary of the October revolution than the magnificent Stakhanov movement.

How Real Are Sanctions

ON November 18 the League of Nations will apply sanctions against fascist Italy. On that date some fifty nations will declare a boycott on all Italian goods and will refuse to permit shipments of key raw materials, which are essential to the effective performance of the black-shirted military machine. The mere threat of these sanctions has made Mussolini panicky. To conceal his alarm he has begun to bluster against the rest of the world. But his hysterical outbursts only indicate how acute is the economic situation in Italy and how fearful Mussolini is that the collective action of the League will stop his criminal adventure against Ethiopia. For effective sanctions are one of the most powerful weapons that can be used to defeat Mussolini. The economic life of Italy would be strangled in a relatively short time if this League wall blocked the flow of vital raw materials and credits without which Mussolini cannot continue the war. Already the scarcity of foreign exchange and the sharp rise in commodity prices have forced Mussolini to take stringent measures to reduce consumption of non-military supplies. Controls have been established over meat, electricity, coal, newsprint and other necessities which have to be imported. Effective sanctions would make this economic strain unbearable for the fascist regime and bring with it the probable collapse of the dictatorship.

OF course, the friends of peace and the enemies of fascism cannot merely sit back and depend upon the League machinery to carry out the job of stopping the war through economic



ARMISTICE DAY

pressure. Among the League nations only the Soviet Union is sincerely interested in preserving the independence of Ethiopia and preventing the war from spreading into another world conflagration. The big imperialist powers like Britain and France are only concerned with making Mussolini submit to a deal that will protect their vested interests in Africa. Even though they may pay lip service to sanctions they will do nothing to carry them out once Mussolini agrees to their terms. It has been revealed by Lloyd George that an English oil company in which the British government has an important interest is supplying the Italian armies in Africa with fuel supplies. If they do this even while they are threatening Mussolini, it is obvious that they will completely sabotage sanctions the moment that a secret understanding is reached with Mussolini.

WE cannot depend upon the capitalist governments to impose sanctions. Only pressure by the working masses and by everyone who believes in peace will force these governments to go through with the sanctions arrangements. This pressure must take two forms. On the one hand, the workers through their own independent activity must throttle Mussolini. Ex-

amples of effective mass action have already been given by American sailors and longshoremen on the Pacific Coast who have refused to sail or load boats destined for Italy. At the same time the greatest pressure must be brought to bear on the capitalist governments to make them really apply collective sanctions. If governments like the tory regime in Britain should attempt to nullify their own promises, then the fight will develop not only against Mussolini, but against these sabotaging capitalist groups. Sanctions will then become a boomerang against the very imperialists who hoped to use them to pull their own chestnuts out of the fire.

Fascism in the Relief Bureau

WITH the closing of relief doors on Nov. 1 to the 13,000 transient workers in New York City who have been on the rolls of the Federal Transient Relief, came the announcement by the Emergency Relief Bureau that 3,000 workers in public-relief agencies are to be laid off. It was admitted at the same time that the number to go would probably reach 5,000 within a few weeks, "Because of the 40-percent reduction in the home-relief load." This in the face of the fact that between Oct. 1 and Oct. 9 there were 10,466 applications for relief and that applications have been pouring in at a rate unprecedented since the opening of the Bureau. Some of the precinct offices are scarcely able at present to interview applicants within two weeks of the date of their application and in others, heads of needy families have been refused even the right to apply. In the meantime the Association of Workers in Public Relief Agencies has set Nov. 20 for a mass meeting in Madison Square Garden to test public sentiment on the fight they are waging against the administration's drive.

How to Free Herndon

THE American Prison Association closed its convention in Atlanta, Ga., with a resolution referring to the chain-gang system as "utterly inconsistent with the dictates of humanity." For this expression, we congratulate them. No penologist who is genuine in his concern for the man behind the bars can have any other attitude toward this barbaric institution. Unfortunately the delegates did not have the complete courage of their convictions. A resolution asking President Roosevelt to take

a hand in abolishing this system was defeated. Austin H. MacCormick, Commissioner of Correction of New York City, presented the following resolution, which was adopted as a compromise measure:

We offer the services of the American Prison Association to those people in this and other states who do not believe in the inhuman treatment of prisoners and are seeking to abolish it [i.e. the chain-gang].

The discussion grew especially acrimonious during the final minutes of the convention after Dr. William E. Grady, associate superintendent of New York City schools, attacked Gov. Eugene Talmadge of Georgia for describing chain gangs as "socialized" travel tours. The article in this issue by Joseph North describes in greater detail the attitude of Georgia's chief executive and leading officials to their prison system.

GOV. TALMADGE is not the only one who believes the chain gangs are "beneficial" to the prisoner. Commissioner A. A. Clarke, Jr., of Atlanta, for example says they are a Godsend. And it is to a Georgia chain gang that Angelo Herndon has been sentenced. He will be sent there unless popular pressure increases to a point which cannot be ignored by the Georgia authori-

ties. The Herndon case, the struggle against chain gangs, must become the center for a nation-wide protest campaign. As North points out, even the scarcely humanitarian prison authorities are revolted by this institution. All progressive elements in America—trade unions, civil-liberties groups, church groups, the entire gamut of socially-minded people, can, if they act in concert, force the abolition of this medieval institution. And the time to act is now, for the Georgia authorities are especially sensitive around election time. They do not ignore telegrams and resolutions of protest. Quite the contrary. These are days when progressive measures are the best vote-getters—and Georgia politicians, though they may not be actuated by strictly humanitarian motives and though they may be practically immune to the tenets of the Golden Rule, will respond to pressure which says, in effect, that they will be turned out of office unless they respond to popular will.

Investigating Alabama

THE NEW MASSES (Oct. 22) published three affidavits of Negro sharecroppers. Three workers had come to New York to ask aid in their struggle against landlord terror in the Alabama cotton-pickers' strike. Annie

Mae Meriwether, widow of a sharecropper lynched for union activity, described the growth of the Sharecroppers' Union, the attempt to prevent Negroes and whites from organizing and winning a wage of \$1 per day. Now, federal authorities announce that they *may* investigate the strike area. They insist that terror against workers and lynchings are outside the scope of such an investigation. The use of relief labor to scab in the cotton fields is even in a narrow legal sense clearly within federal jurisdiction. And the action of postmasters in small southern towns of opening mail addressed to Negro strikers seems also something which a government that is founded on the Bill of Rights would feel bound to investigate. Alabama, in the midst of strife involving bitter class and racial war, has openly disregarded every safeguard of liberty and justice for the workers. Federal investigation is not a matter of choice. All Americans who consider the constitution as more than a scrap of paper should insist that the rights of Negro and white workers to organize, strike, fight oppression, terror and slavery, be upheld.

The People's Press

AN interesting attempt to utilize the technique of tabloid journalism in the service of the masses has just been initiated with the publication of The People's Press. The newspaper, a weekly, is to be published in Chicago and is edited by Frank L. Palmer, for five years eastern bureau manager of the Federated Press. On the staff are Harvey O'Connor, Carl Haessler, Arthur Kallett and James Waterman Wise. The first issue indicates that the editors plan to fight fire with fire; the newspaper is broadly anti-fascist in character and approaches the problem through personalities. Mussolini is pictured as "diseased, insane" and the editors want to know whether a girl, Marion Davies, should marry her boss, William Randolph Hearst. Where the commercial tabloids use "human interest" material and pictures to glorify chorus girls and their boy friends, The People's Press will use the same method to expose big business racketeers; sex stories are replaced with news of labor struggles. The tabloids have gained a large place in American life in the last few years; we hope that The People's Press will be successful in adapting the tabloid technique to better ends.

new Masses

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Published weekly by the NEW MASSES, INC., at 31 East 27th Street, New York City. Copyright, 1935, NEW MASSES, INC., Reg. U. S. Patent Office. Drawings and text may not be reprinted without permission. Entered as second-class matter, June 24, 1926, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. Single copies 15 cents. Subscriptions \$4.50 a year in U. S. and Colonies and Mexico. Six months \$2.50; three months \$1.25; Foreign \$5.50 a year; six months \$3; three months \$1.50. Subscribers are notified that no change in address can be effected in less than two weeks. THE NEW MASSES welcomes the work of new writers, in prose and verse, and of artists. Manuscripts and drawings must be accompanied by return postage. THE NEW MASSES pays for contributions.



Eighteen Years—Two Countries

The Situation in the United States

IN 1917, three years of European war had resulted in huge profits for American capitalism. With the end of the war, the United States suffered a severe economic depression. The building trades had fallen off during the period of 1917-1920; the revival of this basic industry helped the revival of all industry. From 1923 to 1929, American economy seemingly prospered. Capitalist profits rose, the stock market boomed and wide expansion of industry led to the theory that American imperialism had finally solved the great contradiction of periodic capitalist depressions. World trade flourished. American products flooded every market. (Actually, even at the highest point of "prosperity" the average income of 71 percent of American families—in 1928—was \$2,500 a year). The great flaw was the disastrous situation of the farmers, who were losing their land and goods to the big corporations and banks. Workers began to suffer increasingly from the rising cost of living and lagging wages. (Throughout this period of so-called "prosperity" of course, the United States, as opposed to the Soviet Union, was in a state of profound "peace" in a military sense.) In 1929 the stock market crashed and America entered the capitalist crisis—already world wide.

By 1933, with the incoming Democratic administration, banks closed, the gold standard was abandoned. The New Deal was offered as a cure; under it, strikes became increasingly prevalent. Industrial output sank, wages fell to subsistence levels. By 1934, the country suffered unprecedented—and obviously permanent—unemployment. Inadequate relief prevailed, of which the individual's share was at a starvation level. Lynchings; vigilantism; persecution of Negroes and the foreign born; use of militia against strikers, of courts to terrorize labor leaders; these became the order of the day. In 1935, fascist trends and the drive toward war menace the nation. The cost of living rises, real wages fail to equal it. Schools close. Anti-semitism increases. American economy regresses; attempts to preserve it are made by new drives against workers and farmers. Rising to the challenge, for the first time in American history, a real Labor Party movement threatens the reign of the two old capitalist parties.

The U. S.—Capitalist Development

	1913	1934	Decline or Advance
Students in primary and high schools	13,613,656	22,245,342	+70%
Railroad	249,777 miles	245,703 miles	—1.6%
Electrical power output (Kil. hrs.)	17,572,000,000	80,009,501,000	+38%
Output Coal	508,893,053 tons	377,339,000 tons	—25%
“ Oil	248,446,230 barrels	898,874,000 barrels	+260%
Wheat (sown area)	52,021,000 acres	42,235,000 acres	—19%
Books and pamphlets	11,310	8,198	—27%
Literacy	91.6%	95.3%	+0.4%
Hospital beds	532,481	694,473	+30%
Unemployment	Less than million	11,000,000	Increase
Newspaper Circulation	45,257,397	60,590,000	+33%

The Situation in the U.S.S.R.

IN 1917, Russia was in collapse as a result of the war. Its army was in revolt; its people, after suffering oppression, pogroms, starvation, the most intense exploitation, had overthrown the Czar. They wanted "Peace, bread and land." The Social-Democratic and Kerensky government had proved unable to give them any of these. A revolutionary situation existed. The Revolution took place under the leadership of the Bolshevik Party.

The Revolution established the dictatorship of the proletariat in the Soviet Union. But the new workers' state faced civil war. All the great imperialist powers, including the United States, invaded Soviet territory. The proletarian revolution, putting forth all its energy, repulsed them. In 1921, Lenin proposed and carried through the New Economic Policy, of limited private trading, to preserve the new state during its difficult transition to Socialism. With Lenin's death, the Soviet Union's progress was further menaced by the Trotsky counter-revolution.

In 1927, the Communist Party, led by Stalin, consolidated the power of the proletariat, launched the arduous program of collectivization. This step assured, the First Five Year Plan was instituted (and accomplished in four years) to build heavy industry.

Electrification, machine building, mining, etc., developed with astounding rapidity. The Second Five Year Plan followed, to develop consumer goods. Throughout all these gigantic efforts to build socialism, the Soviet Union had been fighting against international boycott and ostracism. Finally, diplomatic relations with the outside world were resumed. The Soviets renounced all imperialist aims, refused to be drawn into war with Japan, pursued a world peace policy and by 1930 had become the most powerful force against war.

Socialism has finally conquered, collectivization is an actuality, wages rise, prices fall, unemployment is non-existent, bread cards are abolished, consumer goods are more abundant. The masses of the population prosper. Without private profit, the state is conducted in the interests of the whole population—who in turn are the state. Anti-semitism, prostitution, exploitation have practically vanished. Soviet economy proves to be sound, rooted, beneficial to all.

The U.S.S.R.—Socialist Development

Russia	U.S.S.R.	Decline or Advance
1913	1934	
7,800,000	24,000,000	+208%
36,360 miles	51,662 miles	+42%
1,945,000,000	20,520,000,000	+950%
29,117,000 tons	93,480,000 tons	+220%
30,780,000 barrels	85,107,000 barrels	+220%
77,952,000 acres	86,867,500 acres	+13%
28,132	43,587	+50%
30%	over 90%	+200%
138,600	426,000	200%
Several Million	None	Decrease
2,500,000	38,000,000	+1,420%



AFTER ELECTION

William Gropper

On the Conveyor Belt to Death

JOHN STRACHEY

LONDON, Nov. 4.

I AM informed that the two British cabinet ministers most closely in touch with economic affairs threw their weight in favor of holding the election this autumn and gave as their reason the opinion that an economic crisis would break out in the new year. One went so far as to prophesy January. The other, while not giving a date, considered that Britain has squeezed every possible advantage out of the inflationary movement since 1931 so that the crisis was now bound to come.

As a matter of fact, I am inclined to think that the slump may not come as soon as these panicked ministers suppose. This is not because the British economic situation is in any way sound, but because the British capitalists have one last card to play. It is a card which has now been played by every capitalist class in Europe. It is armament building, armament building for its own sake, armament building as the final economic policy of desperate capitalism.

At first sight it seems impossible that the entire economic system of a gigantic state like Britain or Germany can be sustained even temporarily simply by armament building, but this is because, I think, we have no conception of the scale on which it is now proposed to build armaments or of the scale on which this is actually being done in Germany. Some inkling of that scale was given by Winston Churchill over the weekend. He said that according to his information Germany was today spending £800,000,000 (\$4,000,000,000) a year on armaments.

(Think what that figure means. It means that Germany is spending for this one purpose £100,000,000 a year more than the entire British budget. Nothing like this has ever existed before in the world's history. It is armament building of a totally new order of magnitude. It is the turning of a mighty nation's entire productive system to this one purpose while the population is held down to subsistence rations.)

Again, it explains another statement made over the weekend: "There is no reemployment except through rearma-

ment." This statement was made by Dr. Schacht, head of the German Reichsbank. Now think what this second statement means. It means, I estimate, that at least five million German workers are today employed on armament building. It means that the whole boasted recovery in German industry since 1933 is absolutely dependent on this gigantic armament program. Schacht's statement and Churchill's figure between them explain completely the semi-famine conditions which are beginning to spread throughout Germany.

Literally there is not enough of Germany's productive effort left over from armament building to feed her population. Finally, and this is the essential point, Germany's present situation is a mirror in which we in Britain can see what our own future is to be if we allow our present rulers to continue in power. Imperialism is the final stage of capitalism. Armament building on a scale sufficient to dominate the whole economic structure is the final stage of imperialism. Every capitalist state must devote itself, body and soul, to the manufacture of the instruments of death. It must do so not only because of its imminent perils from its rivals but also because this is the one remaining way by which it can keep its population in employment.

Was there ever a greater nightmare than this? The only way in which capitalism can now keep us alive is to employ us in preparing to kill each other. In a world which cries out with bitter destitution, which lacks an adequate supply of every single necessary of life, in which there is a shortage of millions of tons of every foodstuff, of millions of yards of cloth, of millions of houses—the one and only form of economic activity which our capitalists will allow us to engage in is the manufacture of tanks, of bombers, of gas, of cruisers and of guns.

It is hardly necessary to add that the economic relief which capitalism can obtain from armament building is extremely temporary. It is one of those "solutions" which themselves intensify the problem. An armament boom is

in essence exactly like any other capitalist boom. It can only be maintained by an ever-increasing acceleration. It must mount higher and higher, must become more and more feverish, more and more hundreds of millions must be spent if the boom is not to collapse. For example, in order to enable Germany to ward off a new slump it will not be sufficient for her to go on spending £800,000,000. Next year she must increase her armaments expenditure to say £850,000,000, and the next year to £900,000,000, and so on and so on.

For reasons which it would take too much space to explain here, but which will be familiar to every Marxist, it is impossible to stabilize such an upward movement. It must be pushed higher and higher in an ever-dizzier and more precarious pyramid until inevitably the crash comes. In other words, once a capitalist state has embarked on armament building on the new scale, has embarked on this last and most desperate and most horrible device for the maintenance of the system, it cannot pause or stop. The vast mass of capital and of human labor which is sucked into the military machine must not only be maintained but must be continually increased. If there is pause or hesitation or check a new crisis will break out.

This is why for economic reasons alone every such armaments race must end in war. The breaking point comes when one or other of the rivals simply cannot stay the course. One dictator or another finds that he must crack within another month. He dare not throw his millions of munitions workers out of work or demobilize his millions of conscripts. Capitalism cannot demobilize. At this moment war must come.

This is then the prospect held out to us by our rulers' pet device of preventing a new slump by initiating a great armament program. This is the conveyor belt to death on to which they would herd us, on to which they will herd us unless we awaken in time.

(These dispatches by John Strachey are appearing weekly in THE NEW MASSES.)

Chain Gang Governor

An Interview with Talmadge of Georgia

JOSEPH NORTH

SOMEWHERE IN GEORGIA.

IT'S all tied up together: to understand the Herndon case you must understand Georgia and Georgia means the South and the South means cotton and cotton means a Negro people living in semi-colonial oppression. Hence the chain-gangs and the Winchester rifles and the bloodhounds and Governor Eugene Talmadge. Our Gene did not have his traditional red suspenders on when we talked things over in his office today but he did flourish his best "back-state" accent, and dropped g's and "swanned" and "goshed" for the best part of an hour, but the sense of his talk was clear. He did think a heap of Hitler and Mussolini for they are strong men and they must be "he'pin'" their people or their people wouldn't have them. "Ain't it so?" And besides he doesn't believe all this ol' stuff about Hitler persecutin' Jewry. "Shucks, Hitler ain't so small as to do a thing like that."

Consequently you understand the man more clearly when he got up at the Sixty-Fifth Convention of the American Prison Association at the Hotel Biltmore and shocked even the scarcely humanitarian wardens by advocating the whipping post for minor offenses and praising the rugged athletic life of a Georgia chain-gang. You get to understand the Herndon case considerably better after you listen to a chain gang break rock and to A. A. Clarke, Jr., head of Fulton County prison camps who will tell you his prisoners put on weight and get their diseases cured after a term under his beneficent care. You understand it more when you sit in the stocks (the same kind they used to put witches in in New England about the time of Cotton and Increase Mather.) I startled Warden Morgan of Bellwood prison camp when I insisted on climbing into the stocks. "We only keep prisoners there a few minutes till their contrariness is over. Never for mo' than an hour at a time," he explained as he shifted his holster with the forty-five in order to wield the lever operating the stocks. I climbed in, my body hanging by wrist and ankles and happily he released me when I suggested it, a few minutes afterward. My wrists still ache as I type this. I talked with Georgia officials and Georgia workingmen, Georgia liberals, Negro and white, and got an insight into Southern class psychologies.

I begin to understand it even more clearly as I look through the window of this train returning North: every once in a while we cut through a cross-road town named Mina or Lawrenceville or Calhoun Falls and you see under an arc-light a couple of dozen bales of cotton awaiting freight; cotton that has

been toted here from the back roads of deep Georgia on rickety wagons drawn by mules and driven by undernourished sharecroppers or tenant farmers. Cotton is way down and the A.A.A. is not helping the poor farmers much and the processing tax is squeezing him and farmers are begging nickels in Atlanta competing with school-boys in selling that noble Democratic paper, The Atlanta Constitution, on Peachtree and Forsyth Streets.

White farmers came in from the back country barefooted and as ragged as Negro sharecroppers and you remember that one of the good things Booker T. Washington said was that to keep man in a ditch you had to get down there yourself. But the man keeping them both, black and white, down there lives up in the Big House, the Colonial style mansion where the big planters live. He is the man you must address as "Yassuh, Cap'n Mista Boss." And because he means to stay in that house he keeps the bloodhounds and the chain gangs in the prison camps and Gov. Eugene Talmadge in the Governor's office.

Empire State of Dixie

THE Atlanta Chamber of Commerce boasts: Georgia is the "Empire State" of the South, "the largest state east of the Mississippi River. On its area of 59,265 square miles live some 2,900,000 persons. About 60 percent, or 1,836,000 are white: 1,071,000 are Negro.

It is a state rich in "all of God's goods;" as the Chamber of Commerce puts it, "Georgia produces or is capable of producing 44 of the 52 commercial minerals, nearly every character of fruit or vegetable, lumber, live stock, poultry, and in fact, practically everything needed for the sustenance or comfort of life."

And I have never seen such misery, such squalor in any other part of America. And that is why Georgia must have its chain-gangs and Winchesters and bloodhounds and Governor Eugene Talmadge.

For the greater part of its \$161,435,000 sale of agricultural products last year was cotton; and cotton is grown chiefly by black and white sharecroppers. The black kept in medieval squalor by every means of terrorism, the whites only a peg or two above. And today those pegs are being removed. As a result news of the Sharecropper Union of Alabama and Arkansas is being welcomed here and Gov. Talmadge knows it. He is a big planter himself with a farm down-state near McRae County.

But do not get the idea that Georgia is merely an agricultural state. It is not; it has

an extensive textile industry, near to the cotton fields so that transportation is cheap. In fact, Georgia's chief manufactory is textiles, which composes the majority of the \$386,210,000 manufactured products sold last year.

And that is why Georgia must have its chain gangs and Winchesters and bloodhounds and Governor Eugene Talmadge.

For the textile interests are determined the United Textile Workers Union shall make no headway here. And when they struck last year good ol' Gene up there in Atlanta called out the State Troopers and broke the strike.

"I'm for the laborin' man, sho'," he said to me. "I been a laborin' man myse'f."

"How about organized labor, Governor?"

"Why, course labor must organize. But they can't use force and violence. I'm agin picketing. Strike? Sho, strike, but don't go to picketin'. That's illegal and unconstitutional. Why they've had many a strike on my farm down in McRae. And they've won every strike, sho'. But they never did picket me. They call a strike and light out over the fence and don't come back till I call them back and then I got to give them what they want.

"The Herndon case? Tell you the truth, I don't know much about the merits of that case. I ain't followed it much. There's such a heap of crime goin' on, you know, I can't follow them all."

"Up North and in the West there's a great deal of talk about the Herndon case" I told him. "And millions of people are stirred up over it."

"Somethin' like that Burns fella" the Governor commented, "The one who wrote *I Escape from a Georgia Chain Gang*."

"Bigger" I said, "Much bigger. That insurrection law of last century," I said, "People throughout America don't like that law. What do you think about it, Governor?"

"Well, it's constitutional and I'm sworn to observe the constitution and the statute books."

"What do you think of the Herndon case itself?"

"I'd rather not commit myself," he hedged. "You see, I understand it might come up before me shortly and I'll have to make a decision and therefo' I'd rather not say much about it now."

"Been a good deal of telegrams and letters come in on the case, hasn't there, Governor?" "A heap."

Then we talked about his presidential aspirations and he didn't care to talk much about that for Roosevelt is coming to Georgia the end of this month for his annual visit to

Warm Springs ("F. D. R. is 'most one of us," the merchants of Georgia say, "Got a winter home here you know.") Talmadge, like all demagogues, is a master at shadow-boxing. He has been dancing all over the political ring socking away at the relief program and at the same time demanding additional millions for Georgia's needs. He has talked third party and lambasted Roosevelt but folks down here don't take that seriously, except in the back country. The city people know Talmadge is jockeying around for some concession from Roosevelt—"Gene wants to go to the Senate next term," they say—and they don't heed his third party talk much.

In fact the Governor doesn't heed it much himself. "Third party? I'd rather fight it out along the old traditional lines if at all possible" he said. "Third party is a colossal organizational task. Why, Teddie Roosevelt said it requires Her-Her-culean, that's right ain't it? Herculean labor. And I believe him. And there's so little time left for such organizing."

"A Good Whipping"

WE returned to the subject of chain gangs.

I asked him what he thought about the attacks on the chain gangs delivered at the convention of the criminologists and prison officials at the Hotel Biltmore. William B. Cox, executive secretary of the Osborne Association, had assailed "the public degradation that comes in working men on public highways, often in shackles and stripes." Cox had described seeing "the dirtiest and most foul-smelling cage wagon imaginable" in one Georgia prison camp. Dr. Nathaniel Cantor, penologist and professor of criminal law at Buffalo University, minced no words. "The Georgia chain gangs are probably the most bestial elements in the American prison system." He had displayed a postcard he had received from a chain gang worker complaining of "undue punishment due to the indifference of the Georgia Prison Commission."

Did this faze the Governor? Not Eugene Talmadge, our 'Gene.

"Well, I said what I thought about that at the convention, weren't you there?" Here is what he said:

"The change in environment and work of the prison camp or chain gang is one of the most humane ways to keep prisoners. A good whipping in a man's own county and town would work better than detention in the smaller crimes such as gaming and wife-beating."

I asked him how small a crime he felt wife-beating was. He said that depends on how hard you hit her.

When I said that reminds me of Hitler who says woman's place is in the kitchen he said he thought Hitler was a mighty fine man. "Course, I don't know for sure, since I haven't ever been in Germany, but folks I know been there and they think a good deal of Hitler. Why the man must be he'ping his

people or they'd put him out. Ain't it so?"

I didn't want to talk too much about S.S. men and Gestapo men as I had to stay in Georgia myself a few more days and the six-footer who was sitting silently on the other side of the room didn't look to me exactly like the Commissioner of Highways, as Gene had introduced him.

The Governor spoke about a lot of other things, chiefly anecdotal, about what a swell guy his pal Huey Long had been and how they had drawn lots down there to murder Huey and how that Dr. Weiss pulled the short one. Huey was honest and a fine pal but his ideas of government were exactly opposite to 'Gene's. "He believed in all government, top-heavy government and I'm fundamentally a Jeffersonian Democrat. I believe in least government and most liberty for the people. Let them work out their own destiny. They will." He said Huey was assassinated "somethin' like Caesar" and that when a man's time comes, nothing he can do can halt it, neither bodyguards nor suits of armor will help. He, 'Gene, has no bodyguard and he does not fear death. He will look his would-be assassin in the eye, alone, and the assassin will retreat. It works. Once happened to him. Fella came in here with a forty-five and wanted \$200 he said state flim-flamed him out of. He'd give 'Gene twenty-four hours to get him the money or else—"That's fair enough" I says to him, "You just come in my ante-room here and wait them 24 hours." Gene ushered him into the ante-room and the man waited eighteen hours and then went home.

"Did you pay him the \$200" I asked.

"I did not," the Governor said.

I went out into that ante-room. Men in overalls, bony, unkempt, sat in plush-chairs waiting on the Governor. Women waiting to plead for their sons' pardons, ward-politicians and visitors from Florida up to pay their respects to a real man and the farmer's friend, Our 'Gene.

In that ante-room, on a table standing next to a large case in which the tattered banner of the Atlanta Volunteers hangs, its Bars and Stars faded and shot through, stand three photographs. The first is that of George Washington; the next that of Governor Talmadge and the third, smaller than the other two, is that of President Roosevelt. A replica of the cracked Liberty Bell stands in front of 'Gene's picture. Behind the table hangs the head of a giant Elk with reddish eyes.

The Governor's secretary put down her magazine, American Astrology, and she beamed at me. "How do you like our Governor?" she asked.

"Right fine" I said, "Right fine. A friend of the people."

"Yes," she said, "That's how we all feel about him here. He's sho' a friend of the people."

Robespierre, Danton, Marat—"L'Ami du Peuple." The Friend of the People.

Eugene Talmadge gets out a weekly

paper—as Huey Long did. It's called *The Statesman*. The masthead reads this way:

Editor: THE PEOPLE

Associate Editor: EUGENE TALMADGE

The Governor told me he prints about 20,000 weekly. I went over and talked to the circulation woman on the paper. She said they print about five or six thousand weekly.

I saw a ragged Negro sitting on a curbstone fourteen miles out of Atlanta, tearing the *Statesman* in strips and stuffing them into the holes of his tattered shoe.

Fulton Tower

FULTON TOWER is one of those places the people of the South will pull down when they have their Bastille Day in Dixie. It stands in the heart of Atlanta, its tower visible from every part of the city, and somewhere behind those bars sits Angelo Herndon, in the same spot he had spent twenty-six months ending August, 1934. W. T. Turner, who says he's not a warden but is in charge of the prison calls himself "stewart and engineer." He is the largest man I have ever seen outside of a circus. Six feet six, he must weigh some three hundred pounds and when he told me he was political football in that country I looked at him twice. The prison was scrubbed from Hangman's Room to the basement, for the Prison Association was in convention and wardens from all parts of the country were making tours and talking shop and Atlanta wanted to be in the running.

Since I was covering the Prison Association convention Mr. Turner guided me through the prison and showed me everything I wanted to see, except the cell where Angelo Herndon sits.

I asked him about Herndon and what kind of a man he thought Angelo was.

"Oh, Herndon?" he repeated, "He's just a light-colored nigger."

I told him what several million workingmen and professionals felt about the "light-colored nigger" and he shrugged his shoulders some two or three feet above me. "He's all right, a good prisoner. He don't make me much trouble except he lies."

"Lies?"

"Yup. Said there was cockroaches in the food and bugs in the bunk. Pack of lies. He ain't unruly, no sir, but he lies so. Why, after those telegrams started coming down here I personally took care of him, saw to it he got the best of victuals and care, and he complained. I don't like a liar."

He took me down into the commissary and showed me how they cook their food. The kettles were burnished bright and the cement floor spotless. Everything shone so brilliantly you understood that housecleaning day must have been yesterday or the day before. He invited me to taste the food. Lunch that day was navy beans, sauerkraut, sweet potato and cornbread. Practically all starches save

for the kraut which was made in a prison camp I don't know how long ago and it made itself known. I ate several spoonful of the stuff; tasteless save for the sauerkraut which was quite the opposite. "Good, isn't it?" the warden said. "Eat it myself."

Gloomy cells with thick, medieval walls. All the windows barred twice—two sets of bars, one of soft, the other of hard-tempered steel. "Man'd have to cut twelve bars to escape," Engineer Turner explained. He showed me the cell Leo Frank occupied. "Guess you heard of him?" he said. "Made a lot of stir, I reckon, when they took him out." He was being gentle: "took him out" was a euphemism for "lynched" him.

How about Herndon, I said again. He seemed to be deep in thought about something else and didn't answer. Finally he explained he wasn't having visitors just yet. He showed me where they used to hang the prisoners and pointed out the rafter which used to bear the rope and told me the names of the last two men hanged here: "Max Wooten, white, and George Satterfield, colored." Since everything else in Dixie has signs "White" and "Colored" I asked if they used the same trap for the "colored." He thought a while and then said apologetically he believed they did.

He showed me where they kept the insane: Bedlam in the seventeenth century was about as advanced, probably had more light. Just a cement box about five feet wide and seven feet long, some straw on the floor and a long slit in the wall where food goes through. I saw some of the insane, in mouldy rags, lying on the floor scooping at the food with clawed fingers. "Cain't give them forks or spoons," Engineer Turner said, "might harm themselves." The insane too are Jim-Crowed.

We sat in his office and he chatted genially about prisons and chain gangs when a friend of his happened in. "Mr. J. P. McCleskey, meet a gentleman from the North." Mr. McCleskey was shorter than Mr. Turner by about a foot but he was well-proportioned, his cheeks apple-red and his eyes clear and blue. He had been in charge of chain gangs for "goin' on seventeen year."

We talked about chain gangs when Mr. A. A. Clarke, Jr., Superintendent of Public Works of Fulton County happened in. Chain gangs are under his personal supervision. They argued the merits of chain gangs. I asked about corporal punishment.

"Ain't none now," said Mr. Clarke, "save for the stocks. We cut out the lash years ago."

Mr. McCleskey became nostalgic. "The lash," he said "was the most humane punishment there was." Mr. Turner put his hand on his friend's knee.

"I don't quite agree with you there, Mr. McCleskey," he said. "The stock's much more suitable." McCleskey put his hand on Mr. Turner's knee.

"There's where we differ," he said gently. Mr. A. A. Clarke, Jr., spoke up. "The

stocks," he said, "is the finest damn punishment ever invented." That sounded final and he was in charge of chain gangs. But apple-cheeked Mr. McCleskey was stubborn. "The lash," he insisted, "two or three licks with it and I never did have any more trouble for a month or mo' in my gangs."

The Chain Gang

FINALLY they decided to carry me out to Bellwood prison camp where the chain gangs return after work. It is about seven miles out of Atlanta and it also was newly whitewashed and spick and span and all the prisoners had newly-washed striped suits on. The Deputy Warden Randolph Morgan showed me about. He looks exactly as you expected him to look: black slouch hat, pistol in his holster, suspenders, coatless and a mouth full of chewing tobacco.

He showed me the sleeping quarters: everything brushed and clean and shining. A coil of chain four feet high is strung along the length of the barracks—about 150 feet—at bed-time and the prisoners are linked to that central chain by heavy four-foot lengths of chain about their ankles. In the center of the barracks a few feet from them are a line of open, rusty toilets. To reach them at night the prisoner must call out "Gettin' up."

Warden Morgan showed me the hospital: "Not many here," he said proudly, "Out of 435 in the camp only six here. That fella there," he pointed out a patient "he's got the malaria, and that one there" he continued in his even, lackadaisical voice, "he's got syphilis of the throat and that one," he snickered slightly, "he's got the grip, so says he."

He showed me the bloodhounds. "Now that one there, it'd surprise ye. Big, full-blooded and lazy as hell. But looka this one." He pointed at a mutt about twelve inches long with an expression much like the Deputy Warden except it didn't wear a black, slouch hat, "that one's the best damn man-tracker we got." He picked the dog up and petted it. "Funny now, isn't it? Big fellow you'd think was good ain't worth a damn—and little 'un she can pick up a trail in a windstorm."

To get to where the chain gang was working, some fifteen miles out of Atlanta, you had to ride through the ritziest section of town, as handsome as the estates you see at Tarrytown-on-the-Hudson except that here they still have little cast-iron statues of Negro stable boys on the curb-stone with hand outstretched to catch the reins. Finally we caught up to the chain gangs grading a road. The picks swung in unison and a guard stood with a big, black hat and a shotgun over his shoulder. The chain gang toiled in a hot Indian-summer sun and behind them was a big bill board with a dinosaurus advertising Gulf gasoline's "great pick-up power."

They work from dawn to dusk and Mr. Clarke told me proudly they have two hours for dinner time in summer, hour and a half in the fall and "a hour in the winter." The

men always gain weight when they serve their sentences and if they have a disease—"Most of them got venereal diseases when they come in"—the prison regime cures them. "They must bathe twice a week" and every alternate Sunday they have visitors and "preachin'." They have preaching only once every two weeks because they prefer visitors, Mr. Clarke said. The chain gangs saved the county close to a million in road work last year. The prisoners cost the county about a quarter of a dollar a day each for food, he said: "About seventy-five cents a day for full maintenance. Chain gang's a blessing for most of them" he said.

I talked to one of the guards: "Heavy carrying that gun all day, isn't it?"

"Lak the fella carryin' a pig in the mo'nin'. By night he figgers it's a hawg." He grinned cheerfully.

"Use it much?"

"Not much. Eight year ago fella got away on me. Went to the toilet and next thing I saw he was runnin' down the road bare-headed and barefooted and no clothes on. I couldn't afford to shoot cause they was a crowd right around him."

"How are the prisoners doing?"

"Fairly well, thank ye, fairly well."

The prisoners can't do much conversing under the wary eye of the guard, so they sing. Here's one of their songs:

"Well, you wake up in the mornin'
Hear de ding-dong ring,
Go marchin' to de table
See de same damn thing.

Well, it's on-a one table
Knife-a, fork, an' a pan
An, if you say anything 'bout it
You're in trouble wid de man.

Well, de biscuits on de table,
Jus' as hard as any rock
Ef you try to swallow them
Break a convict's heart.

My sister wrote a letter
My mother wrote a card
'Ef you want to come to see me
You'll have to ride de rod'!"

They have a refrain that goes like this:

When yo' think I'm laughin'
I'm laughin' to keep from cryin'.

You've heard of that "Rainbow 'round my shoulder" so popular in Tin Pan alley's renditions of Dixie. That rainbow does not signify happiness. It means the damn pick-ax is swinging so fast it looks like a rainbow. I learned that down here at this chain gang where the big billboard advertising the dinosaurs and Gulf's pick-up power overlooks the men grading the road, curing their diseases, and as Gov. Talmadge has it, getting variety which is the spice of life.

The Outlook for Dixie

WHILE I was in Atlanta the newspapers carried headlines that the Governor of South Carolina had called out the National Guardsmen to enforce his decisions

upon the State Highway Commission. The Governor of South Carolina has taken a leaf out of the Governor of Georgia's book. Huey Long, you recall, used the National Guard too in the internal politics of the State. So did Governor Murray of Oklahoma. In an economic system based upon the enslavement of a majority of the population armed, physical terror is necessary to maintain the status quo. As the crisis plunges along and alignments in Dixie become more and more unstable, we can look for actual armed conflicts between the various political groupings. As a matter of fact the press of Georgia today is asking whether Gov. Talmadge will set up a dictatorship after the first of the year.

Here is what happened: the state legislature adjourned its sessions this year without voting appropriations for next year. There is a wide split in Georgia state politics—some of the politicians lining up in the anti-Talmadge category, favoring Roosevelt and opposed to Gene's aspirations. It is fratricidal strife of the ruling groups for the fat pickings of politics. Talmadge refuses to call a special session to discuss the question of appropriations for 1936. As a result the state's functions will come to a standstill on January 1 for lack of funds unless something turns up. Talmadge is cheerful about it all. "There are three divisions in government," he told me, "legislative, judicial and executive. If the other two break down then it's up to the executive." He plans to take the reins in 1936 and levy taxes where he damn well pleases. If the others in the government don't like it, well, the National Guard is under his jurisdiction.

I believe we can look for frequent use of the military to enforce the will of the ins against the outs in Dixie's politics. That means government of the type we used to think characteristic of Central America, in Guatemala, Honduras, etc. In other words, the parties of capitalism will resort to terror against each other; divisions of each party will take up the pistol against one another. If you think this is far-fetched, who shot Huey Long? No longer the cry "Anarchist!" It was an eye-and-nose specialist who wielded the gun. The outs in the major capitalist parties did the trick.

The progressives in Georgia are beginning to realize this. They see that unless they immediately line up and fight for democratic forms of government, military dictatorship is inevitable. Hence, there is a good deal of sympathy for Angelo Herndon on this basis alone. He has been jailed on an outdated "insurrection" law. What will prevent the authorities from using that law next time against a Republican, an anti-fascist, a pacifist? Already arrests have been made of pacifists.

I spoke to a number of Georgia liberals, Negro and white. They understand this well. "We have, in effect, what can be called fascism," one of them told me—after I had promised not to reveal his name. He is a highly respectable man, of the upper middle class, but he has a family and he "does not want the Governor's friends to come down and smash up my home."

He does not want fascism. He does not want a military dictatorship. He doesn't particularly care for Herndon or Herndon's beliefs. He is committed to "the genuine

Jeffersonian democracy." Not the Eugene Talmadge brand.

He sees that Dixie's civil liberties are being shattered all along the line. He knows the Negro never had but the shadow of these liberties. But today, on the basis of destroying the "black menace" and "the Red menace" the rights of even middle-class whites are being revoked. He sees the connection here and it was he who quoted Booker T. Washington's phrase to me that you can't keep a man in a ditch without getting down there yourself.

There you have it: if Herndon goes to the chain gang you have one step further toward outright fascism or military dictatorship. Thus, though the southern liberals hold no brief for Communism, they cannot afford to remain silent when the shackles are prepared for Herndon's legs. Tomorrow or the next day the fetters may be on theirs.

The case of Angelo Herndon has connotations even beyond the imprisonment of a heroic, working-class youth, farther even than the fact that he is Negro. The fundamentals of American democracy are involved. The freedom of the majority of America's 120,000,000 are involved.

The red-suspended, tobacco-chewing governors are far shrewder than they seem; don't let their back-country mannerisms fool you. These are days for the humble, Cincinnati pose. These are days to sport overalls instead of tuxedos. These demagogues of Dixie realize perfectly well the importance of the Herndon case.

And that is why Georgia has its chain gangs, its bloodhounds, its Winchesters and its Governor Eugene Talmadge.

Radio's Role as Red-Baiter

J. R. ATKINS

AMERICA'S HOUR! Over the network of the Columbia Broadcasting System comes the newest radio program. A "Communist" is railing at a crowd of coal miners. "If we had Communism over here, you wouldn't be underground digging coal . . . you'd be the owner to eat caviar and drink champagne. . . . Let's smash what's left."

Army Day! The National Broadcasting Company flashes speeches of the big army patriots. Senator Morris Sheppard of Texas echoes their sentiment in his talk, "Increasing Armaments."

The Crusaders! The Mutual Broadcasting Company appeals for moral and financial support by Fred Clark, fascist National Commander of the Crusaders. The announcer closes the program with "Join Crusaders as they are marching to the tune of 'Wake Up America.'"

Sixty-five million people sit before the radio in 22,000,000 American homes. They seek entertainment, advice and information. They listen to programs with minds beset by the problems of unemployment, high food prices, inefficient government and a way out. And the big radio chains are ready to give them the solutions. As a radio actor, who has been behind the scenes of the major network stations including the new Mutual Broadcasting System, I know the solutions very well. Solutions colored by the fact that radio heads are also looking for a way out—from growing resentment and disillusionment of the people with the New Deal and the entire social and economic structure. My experiences combined with original research, make the story of the advancing power of radio, its increasing control over the people and its definite tendencies towards fascism, a damaging document.

However, propaganda on the radio and the unconscious or conscious movement of those in radio to consolidate the whole finance-capital setup for the preparation of fascism, takes on greater significance when the background of the radio audience is seen through backstage eyes. Few people realize how effective the modern broadcast is on the lives of people who listen to it everyday.

Radio is the greatest power of mass communication today. America alone has more radio sets than the rest of the world combined. The radio listener ranges from my conservative estimate of 65,000,000 to the exact estimate of 80,000,000 by the broadcasters themselves.

In 1930 the census showed that radio ownership was broadest in the upper income brackets. At that time it was natural that the left movement showed a lack of interest

in the influence of radio. The fact that radio owners earned 93-percent more income than non-radio owners probably added to their indifference.

However, the situation becomes more serious with the publications of the latest figures. The increase in radio ownership in the lower income levels is striking. With every million radio homes, radio is bringing strength where strength is needed, massing new radio listeners where ownership has lagged. Today, the majority of the audience is composed of workers and the petty bourgeoisie.

For the first time, the masses of people who have hitherto escaped the greatest publicity medium in the world and who are the nucleus of every progressive and revolutionary movement, have become the target for the propaganda of radio. Are these people influenced by radio? They, themselves, would probably vigorously deny it: "I never buy a thing they advertise. With a turn of the dial or the switch I can control my radio and listen to whatever I want. And as for those dramatic sketches and speeches, who listens to them, anyhow? Sure, radio has some influence, but nothing to make a fuss about."

This carelessness and lack of knowledge is radio's great strength. Fostered by pamphlets from N.B.C., people are continually told that "Radio is America's Invited Guest. When we are tired we can yawn and dismiss it." Take a look at some of these figures and see what happens before you "dismiss it when you're tired."

A recent National Survey of Social Trends cites no less than 150 different effects upon the social life of people, directly traceable to the influence of radio.

RADIO has always claimed to be impartial. Executives and backers shriek from every corner that aside from its entertainment values radio's objectives have been educational and social in nature without political prejudice or control. The headlines of Friday, October 11, 1935 reveal the hurt feelings of the Columbia Broadcasting System when the speech of Baron Aloisi of Italy was prevented from going over its network by Great Britain, who controlled the connecting links to America. Columbia claimed that the Ethiopian side of the war had been given over the network and that it would only be fair to present the Italian side. This "impartial" attitude was acclaimed by all as in keeping with radio's past policies. But Columbia overlooks the facts when they come out so vigorously for impartiality. For example, out of forty-one radio speeches made by important financial and industrial leaders in the month of April, 1935, one fifteen-minute talk was allotted to a labor leader to offset big business propaganda and balance the program schedule.

It is this insistence on "impartiality" by leaders and educators that has lulled people into a lethargy which causes them passively to agree with such statements as "radio's

purpose is to effect better understanding of labor, industry, etc., in relation with each other and the public; to improve international understanding and friendship."

Fortunately, we can pump these statements full of lead.

Said William S. Paley, president of the Columbia Broadcasting System, before the Federal Communications Commission:

It is worth noting that all broadcasts which tend to *develop in our nation a unity of sense and feeling* may be considered to have an important educational value, whatever their subject.

Avowedly, Mr. Paley believes that nationalism is the road to education and internationalism.

Said Merlin H. Aylesworth, president of the National Broadcasting Company:

And herein we find the reason why radio's most popular function (*entertainment*) has grown so mightily . . . unhappy, scowling people are dangerous. These abnormal people not only endanger themselves, they endanger society.

Here's one place where the hackneyed phrase "doping" the minds of the listeners to take their minds off the class struggle has its basis in fact and not theory. Radio does its part as the servant of the public by causing the masses to forget the problems facing them—unemployment, starvation wages, foreclosures, etc. Aylesworth continues:

The social values of radio broadcasting growing every day in volume and intensity, cannot but affect profoundly the cause of a great country and the trend of life itself. . . . Radio broadcasting, with its tremendous power of mass communication is helping to preserve the social order.

The radio form of "preserving the social order" proves to be lectures and speeches given by federal and state officials, business heads, civic leaders, etc.; in nationalistic dramas and in martial music.

Now, as a radio actor who has had actual contact with the forces of radio in the field of drama, I should like to illustrate my point by analyzing one of the most chauvinistic, fascist and Red-baiting dramatic programs ever given over the air since radio started in 1920.

On July 14, 1935, Sunday from 9 to 10, the Columbia Broadcasting System opened a new series of programs called "America's Hour." It was revealed to me in secret by a talkative employe that the entire idea was the suggestion of Vice-President Paul Kesten. The program was designed, through dramatizations of the leading industries, to convince the people that "in America especially, do we have reasons for buoyant hope and deep national pride." Beginning with the railroads the program moved to the coal industry where half their program was devoted to the "blood and sinew" of America—the workers. And in order to make the story of the mine laborers entertaining and interesting, the program included a harmless and rather mild sort of plot.

Ross Rankin, a "Communist," (just released from jail in Valparaiso) comes to a mining town to visit his father and his brother, Joe. Following are his actions:

1. At a dance he monopolizes the attention of his brother's girl, Hazel. Onlookers' typical remarks delivered with open-mouthed incredulity, "You mean, Ross is stealing his own brother's girl?"

2. When Ross and Hazel go out in the garden for a breath of air, Ross the Communist, immediately attempts to take liberties with her person and when not occupied in that pursuit, is making sarcastic remarks about workers who have dirty hands and work in mines.

Typical conversation after Hazel asks Ross how he would solve the industrial problem:

Ross: "Listen baby . . . give me a good mob of these huskies with blood in their eye and some gin down their throat . . . and I'll show you."

Hazel: "Why Ross—you talk like a Communist."

Rose: "Do I scare you, kid? Gimme a kiss." Jim enters and mildly asks for a dance. Ross impolitely drags Hazel away with a "Come on, Hazel—I'll show you that new step I picked up when I lived down on Fourteenth Street in New York."

3. At a gathering of workers Ross makes a characteristic Communist speech: "In Russia you'd own everything. If we had Communism over here you wouldn't be underground digging coal . . . you'd be the bosses . . . you'd be the owner to eat caviar and drink champagne. . . . Everything's going to ruin. . . . Let's smash what's left. . . . We got 'em down."

From the crowd the voice of his father booms out. "Got who down, Ross Rankin? . . . Seems to me if this country's in trouble, this is the time we got to be working together." (This from the man who is representing the starved and overworked miners.) Scene ends with wild cheers by miners.

4. A mine cave-in traps Ross' brother and Hazel's father. Townsend, mine superintendent who has been fighting the workers, decides to risk his life by leading a volunteer rescue section into the mine. Two more men are needed.

Townsend: "How about you, Ross Rankin?"

Ross: (In great fear) "I'm no miner."

Townsend: "You mean you ain't comin'?"

Ross: (Whining) "Why should I?"

Hazel comes frantically rushing in. Finds that Ross is holding up the volunteers by not going.

Hazel: "I know you're no miner, Ross Rankin—but . . . [sob] . . . I thought . . . [sob] . . . I thought you were a man."

Van Voorhees, the announcer, chimes in with:

You, multiplied by other millions, are America! The mutual cooperation of all these millions make the health of America. Nations can grow ill just like individuals: The most terrible illness is the illness of class conflict. It starts to occur the moment anyone tries to convince us that we should fear, hate or destroy any of our neighbors, to maintain our advantage. . . . Let's keep our heads.

GARBAGE? Sure. Unimportant? Certainly not. That program in time alone was worth \$17,000 (ninety-one stations). Add to this the cost of the best symphony orchestra (Howard Barlow conducting), the cream in announcers and directors (Van Voorhees, Max Wylie and Dwight Clark) and figure out for yourself if the Columbia Broadcasting System was using its facilities every week for something that it considered unimportant. This poison

was estimated to have reached five million families (about 15 million listeners); and if one takes into account the fact that the most valuable spot on the air is Sunday evening, that the Columbia network is, by recent polls, proven to have the greatest popularity amongst listeners and that every department of the station was used to make this program click, it is easy to gauge the effectiveness of the propaganda.

This is one chain, one program, one hour. Multiply nine such weeks of nationalism and the extolling of the decadent capitalistic, individualistic system to the minds of the masses and one has a faint idea of what the ninety-eight C.B.S. stations and eighty-eight N.B.C. studios are throwing over the air "to preserve the social order."

It has just been announced that Columbia has a new series of sponsored programs similar to "America's Hour," titled "The Cavalcade of America." Its purpose is to spread nationalistic propaganda by reaching the minds of educators and children. Heard Wednesday evening from 8 to 8:30 and sponsored by the Du Pont Co., it will stress (says the press release) "achievements in colonization, transportation, etc., and it will use *fundamental traits of American character as a background theme*. . . . This program will be of particular interest to parents and teachers."

Need one ask what Mr. du Pont's idea of "fundamental traits of American Character" is (rugged individualism, "my country right or wrong, the constitution, competition and progress," and blind faith in a government controlled by politicians and bankers)? A persuasive program such as this under the guise of Americanism can do immeasurable harm. It should be met with vigorous protest; even a postcard will do the trick. More effective, since this is a sponsored program, would be the threat of a boycott of the advertised Du Pont product. There's only one voice that can make a sponsor change a program—the public through the mails. I've seen radio broadcasting concerns scrap material that has taken weeks to gather and write because of adverse public opinion.

NO periodical, motion picture, play or chain of newspapers can influence so many people simultaneously as the large radio networks. For example, in time of war or any emergency, we may well shudder to think of what will happen when the power of radio is utilized by the government. On October 2, 1935, preliminary to the actual invasion of Ethiopia, Mussolini began his war speech to the Italian nation:

Black Shirts of the Revolution. Men and women of all Italy! Italians all over the world! —beyond the mountains, beyond the seas! Listen!

From the first word, 20,000,000 people in Italy and millions of Italians over the world were able, *at the same moment*, to listen and be aroused to the proper war fever

through the facilities of the Italian and American networks. But there is no need to look to fascist Italy for material. The files of the National Broadcasting Company, where all important statistical data as to lectures is kept, give some very important facts.

Under Programs and Personalities for the Month of April, 1935, we find:

Classifications	Number of Broadcasts
Federal, Public and State Officials.....82	(2nd highest of month)

[Included in this list and typical of the speeches given were those of Sen. Gerry of Rhode Island on "Peace and Naval Programs"; Harold Ickes, Secretary of State, who spoke "In Defense of the Present Administration"; and Sen. Morris Sheppard on "Increasing Armament" at Army Day.]

Business Heads	41
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[This classification has very unusual fascist leanings of the better sort. As illustrations, take the talks of Lamont du Pont, president of the Du Pont Company on, ironically enough, "Human Wants and the Chemical Industry" (War?) Will B. Bull, president of the American Cyanamid Company on "Recovery by Alchemy or Chemistry"; and C. L. Bardo of the National Association of Manufacturers on "Art in Industry." Alfred Sloan, Jr., president of General Motors; Gerard Swope, president of General Electric; Felix Warburg, banker; Owen D. Young, Grover Whalen, etc.]

Leaders of Civil, Patriotic, Political and "Peace" Societies.....	26
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[One example will suffice to explain this heading. On Army Day, Capt. Francis Adams of the Minute Men of America (a proven fascist group), spoke an hour. On the same day Frank Belgrano, Jr., National Commander of the American Legion spoke. Prominent among other featured speakers was Mrs. Russel Magna, president-general of the Daughters of the American Revolution.]

All Government, State and Public Officials	81	63	66
Leaders of Civic, Patriotic and "Peace" Societies	28	21	34
Business Heads	28	16	9

TYPICAL SPEECHES GIVEN JULY, 1935

General Douglas McArthur on "National Preparedness"; Frank Belgrano, Jr., American Legion, on "Wake Up, America"; Jouett Shouse, president of the American Liberty League.

The conclusions are obvious. The tendency toward fascism lies in the consolidation of the more powerful capitalist interests and organs of the government to protect themselves against the protesting masses. Radio as a weapon is used toward that end by filling the air with speeches of government officials, business heads and patriotic societies. In this way it not only caters to its advertisers, but insures its own safety by molding the minds of the people after its ideology through the distribution of demagogic viciousness.

THERE is one more field of radio concerning us that today occupies approximately 60 percent of the time on the air—music. In the last war the George M. Cohan song hits had much to do with rousing the war fervor. With radio's ability to communicate

a rousing war song to more than 60,000,000 listeners, the government can play havoc with the feelings of the masses in time of war.

Knowing this and understanding that the only way to prevent the arrival of such a condition is to organize band leaders, Richard Himber of Studebaker Champion fame, one of the foremost orchestra leaders of today and a member of the N.B.C. artists' bureau, took the first important step. Several months ago he stated that he and several other orchestra leaders had agreed not to play any martial tunes on the air, because they stirred up false patriotism. This announcement caused such veterans as Paul Whiteman, ex-Navy man, to shriek that the whole idea was unpatriotic and un-American.

I called at Mr. Himber's apartment in Essex House. He reiterated everything he had formerly said, then plunged into greater detail:

"Regardless of my personal opinions on questions of emergencies that may beset this country, such as war, I feel that music should not be used as an instrument to create false emotions that becloud the issues. At the time the statement was made public a few months ago, several other orchestra leaders merely agreed with me that the exclusion of martial music on the air would be a progressive step in the peace movement."

"How did you find the response to all this, Mr. Himber?"

"Great. Enthusiastic letters poured in from women's clubs, and supporters from all over the country, but [here he chuckled] I received quite a lambasting from some super-patriots including Paul Whiteman." Himber frowned. "Whiteman never did get what I was driving at."

I decided to visit both major networks to see what the reaction of the other baton wielders to this statement would be. While in the offices of Mr. Wimbish, publicity department of the N.B.C., I managed to dig up quite a few opinions. "Jolly" Coburn, who had just completed twenty-six weeks at the Rainbow Room in Radio City, remarked: "Himber has a good idea there. When you come to think of it, I don't believe I'd play martial music at all — and that includes 'There's Something About a Soldier'."

I came up against a stone wall in the case of Harold Stern. My general impression was that it seemed hard for him to comprehend my questions. He began by telling me that "a march is an inspiring thing. Why I've always played them. There's nothing like them. Vallee, Lyman and Waring play them."

"But you see, Himber said that marches arouse false patriotism and emotion." He nodded emphatically. "Now Madriguera," I continued, "said that he thought it was a bad thing to use music to stimulate fellows to go to war and kill." He again seemed to agree. "What is *your* opinion about it?"

"Well, I don't think there's anything wrong with martial music. I could think of

nothing better than to begin a program with. Especially at a party where things have to be livened up." I again asked if he thought music had anything to do with sending men into the last war. "Absolutely not. Music has never had anything to do with a situation like that. No, you can quote me as saying that I don't agree with Mr. Himber at all."

I was anxious to get a statement from the "King of Jazz" because of his former vitriolic outburst on the same question. I called his office. When I told his press agent what I wanted, she told me that Mr. Whiteman had nothing to say. Besides, he was very angry at the adverse publicity he had already received the last time he came out against Himber and didn't want to be mixed up in anything of that sort again. He was an ex-Navy man and an American. What could I expect him to say? I visited Whiteman's office anyway. Again his press agent refused to permit me to see him, telling me that Mr. Whiteman refuses to comment on mat-

ters military. This is understandable when you know that Whiteman gets many engagements through the influence of the Army and Navy officials.

IT IS well known that the chief source of information regarding the effect of radio programs is fan mail. Especially is this true of sustaining programs where the station is unable to use the yardstick of increased sales. As one who has seen programs changed time after time when an avalanche of mail hit the station, I cannot stress too strongly the importance of written protest. Every "America's Hour" should be fought. The slow poison of radio should be stopped before it can make further progress. Letters, phone calls, boycotts will do the trick. My suggestion is to start on "Cavalcade of America," Wed. evening (W.A.B.C.) and "The Crusaders," Thursday from 9:30 to 10 (W.O.R.). All fighters against war and fascism, including workers' organizations, churches, theater groups and liberal clubs

should check up on radio programs weekly. An excellent example is the column in The Daily Worker called "Around the Dial." The next step is organizing radio entertainers to refuse to participate in slanderous dramatizations, songs, war skits and material of similar manifestations. As for the announcers, Heywood Broun has found them in the same position as the actors. Not only reluctant to protest against low wages but with no idea of how important their organized strength would be to the other artists.

I have not devoted much space to the industrialists and bankers controlling radio programs. As an example, out of the eighteen members of the National Advisory Council of N.B.C., eleven are directly connected with leading banks and corporations. Others have discussed this problem more competently. My purpose is to urge immediate organized protest against those stations and programs that have abused radio's power and thus pave the way for a still greater fight against this weapon.

Where Smedley Butler Stands

WALTER WILSON

NOW and then in history a member of the ruling class of a nation courts ostracism from members of his class and comes out to champion the cause of the bottom dog. Sometimes it is a famous writer; sometimes it is a famous statesman; sometimes it is a famous general; sometimes it is one kind of a man and sometimes another. Two famous examples that come easily to me are St. Francis and Tolstoy. Thomas Jefferson is perhaps the best known American example, but there have been many other lesser lights in our history. We need to be on the watch out for such men to appear in this period of American history and to be extremely careful not to scare them away.

I have just interviewed a man for THE NEW MASSES who has an excellent opportunity to perform notable work for his country and his fellow men and thereby to win an enviable place in American history. I refer to Major General Smedley D. Butler, United States Marine Corps (retired).

SMEDLEY BUTLER'S ancestors have been respected citizens around West Chester, Pennsylvania, for many years. A Butler has occupied the bench of Chester County without a break for the past seventy-five years. Both of Smedley's grandfathers were Hicksite Quakers and young Smedley was brought up as one—and still is one, he reckons, in good standing. As might be expected, his grandfathers were pacifists. One of them helped to maintain an underground

railroad. But when Lee got up around Gettysburg these two devout pacifists shouldered muskets and helped to oust the invaders. Grandfather Butler was put out of the Orthodox meeting house for his zeal in these eviction proceedings. Thomas N. Butler, Smedley's father, served his district in Congress for thirty-two years.

Smedley Butler was born July 30, 1881, in West Chester, Pa., and he had always lived—when not in the army—within a dozen miles of his birthplace. He went to school at the Friend's Graded High School in West Chester and later to Haverford School near Philadelphia. When he was sixteen the Maine went down in Havana harbor and he volunteered in the marines, over the protest of his parents. This was the beginning of his long career in the army (over 30 years' service), during which he rose from private to Major General, without ever having attended any form of officer-training school. That career carried him all over the world.

He served in Cuba, the Philippines, Haiti, China, France. The details of his military life have no place here. Much of it, of course, is open to criticism. But the criticism is not so much of Smedley Butler as it is of the imperialist policy of the American financiers, manufacturers and the American government. Had Butler not led the marines on their expeditions, some other officer would have.

At least one thing Butler did as an officer and that was to endear himself to

the rank-and-file soldiers in all branches. He treated them as human beings and not cogs in a military machine. He often called his men "you birds." He took off his coat and carried duckboards incognito while helping to clean up the disease-infested mudhole at Brest late in 1918 and won the name of "General Duckboard." The fact that he rose from the ranks and was hated by the West Pointers did not injure him in the eyes of the privates. And today General Butler (also known as "Old Gimlet Eye") probably has more influence among the American veterans of the World War than any other man living.

The main thing we need to bear in mind about his record in the army is that Butler, himself, has repudiated the imperialistic acts he was made to perform. He has on many different occasions in recent years exposed the role of the marines in "supervising" elections in various American colonies or semi-colonies. Speaking in Pittsburgh on December 5, 1929, the General told how the marines took charge of elections in Haiti and elsewhere. "Our candidates always win," he said in referring to the marine-sponsored candidates. He also exposed the method of declaring the opposition "bandits." In Haiti he said a marine-controlled president had dissolved the Haitian Congress illegally to prevent the legislative body from adopting a constitution which would have been unfavorable to American interests. Such an expose must be applauded. It meant that General Butler was making a public repudiation

of his part in the whole dirty business. It should be borne in mind also that this was begun while he was still in the service and at a time when he had everything to lose so far as a career was concerned.

Speaking before the Congregation B'nai Jeshurun in New York on November 13, 1934, Butler revealed that he was reaching complete disillusionment about the role he had played. "For thirty-three years and four months," he said, "I was an active agent in the greatest debt-collecting agency in the world, the United States Marine Corps."

Measured by the standards of military efficiency and personal bravery, Smedley Butler is a good soldier. He was such a good one in fact that he won all the medals in the American assortment and he also won the praise of military men all over the world. Theodore Roosevelt, Sr., considered him the "ideal American soldier." Charles G. Dawes has characterized him as "a man with great guts." There is a lot of truth in this. Butler was decorated several times for helping to bring off wounded comrades under fire and his reputation for bravery among the men who served under him is universal. One of his former corporals once told me: "That man ain't afraid of nothing nor nobody." Even the Navy Department, whose officials with the exception of Josephus Daniels and one or two others, have always hated him, described him in 1924 as "one of the most brilliant officers in the United States." General Butler is one of the three or four living men to be twice awarded a Medal of Honor by special act of Congress. In addition, he holds sixteen other American decorations and medals.

During the past few years Smedley Butler has gotten into the news on many different occasions. He has made slashing attacks on war; on Mussolini; on the army and navy officer caste; on the American Legion's "Royal Family"; on "industrial autocracy" and many other evils. His expose of the role of the colonies of American imperialism was what first attracted the notice of liberals to him. Then came the famous Mussolini incident. The recent William Gropper-Japanese Emperor-Jinrikisha cause celebre was nothing compared to the furor that that story caused. The General told the story of how Mussolini was riding along with an American in an Italian city when his speeding car ran over a small child. The American suggested that they not act like "hit-and-run drivers" but that they stop and render aid. Mussolini was quoted as having said quite calmly: "What is one life in affairs of state?" Italy protested and the American Navy Department had Butler put under arrest and confined to close quarters—the first general officer to be so humiliated since the Civil War (and quite different from the way the Navy Department handled Admiral Stirling recently for his savage attack on a friendly power). Courtmartial proceedings were started. The whole business was finally



GENERAL SMEDLEY D. BUTLER

stopped, says Butler, because of the support given him by the veterans and others who believed in a spirit of fair play. (Butler's first experience with the head of a fascist state was not an altogether pleasant one and might have influenced his subsequent attacks on fascism.) It is thought by many that this caused the General to retire from the marines. He says not, although most likely it was a contributing factor.

The real reason was this. Butler was in line to promotion as Commandant of the Marine Corps. But he had incurred the deadly hatred of the "Brass Hat" admirals and they frankly said they'd be damned if they'd have "Old Gimlet Eye" Butler at the head of the marines. "Why in no time," they said, "he'd be trying to run the Navy." So they went way down the line and selected a brigadier general for the job. Butler told them that in that case the marines would have to get along without him.

A FEW months ago Smedley Butler again came into the news as a result of his expose of the plot to get him to head

up a fascist movement in the United States. Wall Street undoubtedly was prepared to back him with any amount of money. He revealed that between fifty and one hundred individuals and organizations had approached him to get him to lead such a movement. The forces of reaction knew that Butler's influence was very great among the world war veterans and the common people generally and they resolved to take a chance on him. And they knew that it was only a chance. For Gerald McGuire, the liaison man between Wall Street and Butler, told the McCormack-Dickstein Committee that the Morgan interests were not willing to trust Butler, because "he was too radical and might lead the army in the wrong direction." Branches of the Reserve Officers Association had also attacked him. At any rate it is to Butler's credit that he not only spurned the offer and the thousands of dollars in cash that went with it, but he turned over all the material and information he had to the Department of Justice. Later he testified before the Congressional Committee (supposedly investigating fascism) and he also

attacked the McCormack-Dickstein Committee for suppressing testimony and for refusing to call the higher-ups in the plot.

All of these things and more caused me to wonder a great deal about what was in the General's mind. Then one day recently, to cap the climax, I read that General Butler, Congressman Marcantonio and Earl Browder, Secretary of the Communist Party, were to speak on the veteran's problem at the New Star Casino from the same platform. Butler, it was made clear, would present his personal viewpoint.

Some of the New York newspapers sabotaged the meeting. Two went so far as to say falsely that Butler would not be present because he had learned that Communists were to be there. Well, I went to that meeting, without much hope of seeing the General on the platform. He showed up in his shirt sleeves and followed James Ford, Negro veteran and labor leader, on the program. One of the first things he said was: "A lot of New York newspapers have tried to keep me from coming here tonight. They told me I'd find a nest of Communists up here. I told them 'What the hell of it!' In 1917 the government went around drafting boys into the army; they didn't ask then what a man's politics were; they merely asked if he had a sound body and a strong back. I am here to talk on the veterans and I take it that everybody here is either a veteran or is interested in the veteran's problems. That is all that I ask."

After that speech—in which he made a slashing attack on war and the war profiteers—I talked with General Butler for a few minutes. He invited me down to his home to see him. I was anxious to go. For I wanted to place the man. Most of his statements on social and economic problems had been rather general. So general, in fact, that a lot of people mistakenly considered him a demagogue in the Long or Coughlin class. Just where did he stand?

It was with the intention of finding the answer to this question that I rode up to his beautiful old farm house at Newtown Square, Delaware County, Pennsylvania.

"Well, boy," he asked right off, "what is it you folks at THE NEW MASSES want to know about me? People don't pay any attention to what I say or think." I frankly told him that we wanted to pin him down to see just where he stood on fundamental issues facing the country. "Why, I don't know anything except the war racket," he countered. "If you want to know anything about that, just fire away and ask me what you want to know."

"All right," I accepted. "Let's start off talking about the veteran question. I believe you are on record as favoring the immediate payment of the adjusted compensation certificates?" He assured me it was only what he called "soldier's back pay."

"General, how would you raise the funds to pay the bonus?"

"I believe in taxing those who profited by

the war," he answered. He assured me that he would not favor any bonus plan which would make the common people and the unemployed share the burden of paying for it. He was particularly hostile to the Vinson Bill and the Fish Bill. The former plan which would issue bonds he called "a banker's bill"; the second would take the funds to pay the bonus from appropriations for the unemployed.

"Boy," he commented, "the next session of Congress is going to pass a bonus bill. Franklin D. Roosevelt is going to steal the credit for it and make political capital out of it. You just watch and see. The dumb soldiers will believe he is for them and will vote for him again because of it. But they had better watch out for what he gives with one hand he'll take away with the other."

General Butler likes to talk about the dumbness of the veterans and soldiers. "They are the dumbest crew on earth," he assured me time and time again. I was at the New Star Casino meeting and heard him revile the veterans for their "plain ignorance" and they ate it up. He can berate them because they consider him an ally.

"The soldiers are dumb or else they would not have been out working for a gold-standard resolution. Now I ask you," and he grew belligerent, "what in hell did the veterans know about the gold standard? There is just as much sense for a veteran to be out shooting for the gold standard as there is in Bill Green [A.F. of L. chief] over at West Point with the 'Brass Hats' reviewing cadets." He continued, "I can prove that they are a dumb crowd, otherwise they wouldn't let the Royal Family of the Legion and the Wall-Street-subsidized, so-called patriotic Family of the Legion and the Wall-Street-subsidized, so-called patriotic societies make cats'-paws out of them. What business have veterans to be out whooping it up for preparedness and for the munition makers. No matter how silly a red-herring, canned resolution is, if sent to them by the reactionary Professional Patriots, they'll pass it."

WHILE on this line I asked him what he thought of the advice that Governor Earle of Pennsylvania gave to the State Department of the Legion at its recent convention. He assured me that he approved what Earle said and that he wanted to give the same advice. "Let anyone propose a reform, no matter how mild, or express a progressive thought and he is attacked as a Communist or a Socialist," the General declared.

What Governor Earle told the Pennsylvania Legion Convention was as follows:

I warn you that our civilization is in danger if we heed the deceptive cries of special privilege; if we permit our men of great wealth to send us on a wild-goose chase after so-called radicals while they continue to plunder the people. . . . We are told constantly of the evils of Communism and Socialism. The label is applied to every man, woman and child who dares

to say a word which does not have the approval of Wall Street.

He pointed out that organized wealth threatens to plunge the country into fascism. General Butler too believes that fascism is a real danger and warns against it. He declared that when Wall Street realizes that the people can't be fooled any longer with empty promises "they'll try the same tricks used by European dictators to keep capitalism on the top of the economic heap. That, I think, is the real danger facing us today. The whole question of fascism is something that all of us, farmers and white-collar people and workingmen alike, must watch closely if we wish to protect our liberty and freedom."

I asked him just where he stood politically. He told me that he was a firm believer in democracy as it had developed in America, though he admitted that there were many undemocratic features to it and that there were many reforms needed. He pointed out that the Constitution was written behind closed doors by a small group of men representing special privilege. But as things had turned out under the Constitution the masses had benefited by it. He said he would die to preserve democracy and would fight to broaden it. That all sounded good to me, even though it was quite general. So I tried to bring him down to the specific. "Just what individuals and organizations in American life," I asked him, "do you consider doing the job you wish to see done?"

He pondered a moment and said that he thought Congressmen Maverick, Lundeen and Marcantonio were doing wonderful work in Congress and that he had great hopes for them. He always respected and liked "Old Bob" La Follette and had had great hopes for "Young Bob," but he thought the recent amendment of Senator La Follette reducing the minimum to \$800 in the Roosevelt tax measure would hurt him. Butler considered Justices Brandeis and Cardozo to be real, honest liberals. The only organization he would give blanket approval to was the American Federation of Labor. He was a bit critical of some of the organization's leaders. "Why, I'm more radical than most of them." He thinks the organization should be more militant and should push organization of the unorganized. As he expressed this thought: "Let one drop of water fall on your bald head and it doesn't make much impression, but let it keep dropping over a long period and see what happens." He also thinks it is unfortunate that the headquarters of the A.F. of L. are in Washington and thereby exposed to all the evils, including social lobbies, in that city. "A lot of labor leaders, I'll bet, never wore a full-dress suit in their lives until they went to Washington."

Speaking about the A.F. of L. gave me a chance to ask him what he thought about the right of labor to organize and to strike and also what he thought of the company union.

"The company union is a racket, pure and simple. A racket," he explained, "is something that pretends to be what it ain't. A company union pretends to be a real union when in fact it is a tool of the employer." He continued: "Workers should have the right to form unions of their own choosing. The employers should have absolutely nothing to say about the matter. The workers have the right to demand that their unions be recognized, too. Take the Camden shipyard strike. I made three speeches over the radio in Philadelphia taking the part of the strikers." General Butler thinks that the strike is practically labor's only weapon.

"When workers who are made into animals—I mean," he corrected himself, "that they are forced to live like animals—try in every way to improve their conditions by peaceful methods and then as a last resort go on strike they are condemned by some people as Bolsheviks, out to destroy life and property."

He pursued this chain of thought. "Then after the workmen get desperate and have to go out on strike the National Guard is called out to shoot them down. Why, a pane of glass in a mill is worth more than a worker's life. But people are getting tired of American workmen—in the uniform of National Guardsmen—shooting down other American workmen striking for a fairer division of the profits their energy created."

"Hold on there a minute, General," I warned him, "if that Tydings Military Disobedience Bill becomes a law, the authorities would like nothing better than to have you picked up for making a statement like that."

"That's so," he assented. "But I don't think it will pass. I think the American people have too much sense to let such a tory law be put on the statute books. I want you to quote me as being against all of these Tydings and sedition bills. We have enough laws already to cope with any really criminal acts." He also said he hoped the world war veterans would not be misled into endorsing such foolish legislation. A lot of veterans would have landed in the hoose-gow," he pointed out, "in 1932 for criticizing Douglas MacArthur and Hoover for evicting the bonus army from Washington had there been such a law as the Tydings bill in force."

The General deplored the fact that veterans have allowed themselves to be used as strikebreakers. He told me that in 1934 he was invited to speak to the annual convention of the 29th Division Association at Racine, Wisconsin. Some veterans had been active there in helping to break an auto-workers' strike at the Nash Motor Company plant. Butler criticized this action and was pounced upon by the National Guard officers present.

Butler recently spoke to the Pennsylvania State Federation of Labor. He thinks he must have shocked some of the more conservative leaders present, although he got generous applause from the great majority of those present. He has been before two Congressional committees recently. He testified

before it in favor of the bill to prevent the use of federal equipment by the National Guard while on strike duty. Before the other one he attacked the present high command of the Marine Corps. Butler charges that the officers of the marines who rose from the ranks are being "broken" and replaced because "their table manners are not good enough to enable them to mingle with Newport society."

MY interview with General Butler lasted from ten in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon. We even kept talking while we ate the fried chicken, corn, potatoes, beets and tomatoes raised on the Butlers' seven acres. After eating and showing me about the garden, the General drove me to the interurban station two miles away. As we rode slowly along the narrow road, which ran through a sea of sweet-smelling, luxuriant corn, I asked him what he does as a hobby or to earn a livelihood.

He answered, "I have nothing to do. I have no profession, as I went away to the army when I was sixteen. Now, I don't know what to do with myself. I need a job. Of course I manage to keep busy doing a little something. During the past four years I have made over 1,200 speeches in over 700 towns and cities. I don't know how to do anything and I haven't anything to sell. All I know is how to understand and to handle men. Not long ago the head of a big corporation wanted me to take a job as personnel manager at a large salary. Of course that simply meant keeping the workers fooled. Well, God knows I need the money as I am a poor man. But even if I have to lose my little place, I'll never take anything like that."

The General pointed out some of his neighbors' places to me as we rode along. One of

the Du Ponts live on his road. Their relations are none too cordial, I gathered. Governor Earle also lives nearby. I gathered from the General's conversation that he is a man pretty much alone. Most of his old associates from among army officers and business circles don't like the things he has been doing and saying lately. This, it seems to me, is strongly in Butler's favor. By taking the stand he has risked and got ostracism from the ruling class—the admirals, the Royal Family of the Legion, the reserve officers, the West Point clique, the Wall Street crowd; the fascists hate and distrust him. Franklin D. Roosevelt had Smedley Butler's name struck from the list of distinguished guests to be invited to the Miami Legion convention in 1934! He told me that even certain relatives have lined up against him. It would seem that he has broken irrevocably with the upper classes.

However, one should not get the idea that Smedley Butler is a revolutionist. He is not. He is a staunch believer in old-fashioned American democracy. He also believes in law and order. He even goes so far as to say that if the Tydings Bill is passed it should be enforced. He excused this position, however, by saying that it is his theory that the quickest way of repealing an unjust law is strictly to enforce it. If he sticks to his present position—and he is likely to—democracy in America has found a powerful champion and the reactionaries, the war-mongers and the fascists—those who represent the tory tradition in American history—may well quake in their goose-stepping boots. Smedley D. Butler knows their game as well as they know it. He is in a position to perform invaluable service to his country and to his fellow citizens by continuing to champion democracy and to expose what he aptly calls "the twin rackets of war and fascism."

Tompkins Square Park at 6 A. M.

MATTHEW SCHAEFFER

Dawn slides wearily over tenements
Bleaching the furtive night,
Listlessly dusting the rattling streets of the morning.
And the rusted iron of the park fence
And the leaning "keep-off" sign guarding the what-there-is-of-it
grass,

Where sprawled out lie half-a-hundred men
Dressed in what are pajamas when they sleep,
Business suits when they are up,
Sunday suits on holidays—and rags at all times;
Resting on earth's sweet bosom with the green freshness of
the grass

And the softness of the breezes and the ants and the rocks
And rheumatism and stiff bones for company.
Ah! calm and sweet are summer's evenings!
But think—not all the year is August.
Birds fly to warm lands—where are your wings?
Where will *you* go when winter comes?

The Outlook For the Labor Party

CARL REEVE

WITH the closing of the campaign, the Labor Party adherents can record substantial accomplishments. Not only has there been a steady rise in the sentiment of the workers and farmers throughout the country for a Labor Party and a strengthening on a national scale of the agitation for it, but on a local scale, this demand for a Labor Party has already been crystallized in a number of key industrial centers, into the organization of city Labor Parties and labor tickets. Especially in Detroit, Toledo and San Francisco have the Labor Party advocates had rich experience in this election campaign. These local Labor Parties were all based on the American Federation of Labor Unions. They all adopted platforms putting forward the immediate burning needs of the workers.

In Toledo, the Lucas County Labor Congress for Political Action has withstood the assaults of a Red scare launched by the big employers. The Labor Congress has its main strength in the Toledo Central Labor Council of the A.F. of L. In the home stretch of the campaign, with the strength of the Labor Party forces worrying the old-guard candidates, the reactionary Toledo Blade published a blast charging that the "purpose of the Labor Congress is to break down the governmental and economic system of the United States and set up Sovietism in its place." The platform was attacked because it proposed production of goods for use instead of for profit. The Toledo Central Labor Union passed a resolution calling upon all unions, advertisers and organizations to boycott The Toledo Blade and reaffirmed the union's support of the Labor Congress.

Since this is being written before the polls open, the actual voting strength of the Labor Party cannot be given. But the Toledo Labor Congress went into the final days of the election campaign with colors flying, holding large mass meetings on behalf of the two Labor candidates for the Board of Education and seven Labor candidates for Councilman.

In San Francisco the United Labor Campaign Committee is endorsed by thirty-five A.F. of L. local unions as well as other workers' organizations. Here the Labor Party forces have had to contend with the campaign of Edward Vandeleur, reactionary president of the Central Labor Union, to re-elect Mayor Rossi, chief strikebreaker during the San Francisco general strike. Vandeleur, disregarding the wishes of the A.F. of L. membership, organized "The Union Labor Party" to back Rossi. Vandeleur then began issuing false statements over the radio, that "Labor considered all the candidates and unanimously endorsed Rossi."

This brazen falsification was quickly scotched by a blistering statement from the powerful San Francisco local of the International Longshoremen's Association, which exposed the bloody role of Rossi's police in the maritime and general strikes last year. The I.L.A. local lays responsibility for the killing of strikers at the door of Mayor Rossi, who is characterized as "rabidly anti-labor." "Rossi must go," says the I.L.A. local. "The genuine Labor Party is the United Labor Campaign Committee. The United Labor Committee speaks for workers employed and unemployed, organized and unorganized, for the middle classes, for professional people and for the majority of the people of San Francisco."

"We, members of local 38-79 of the I.L.A., have endorsed the platform and candidates of the United Labor Ticket and are actively participating in this campaign."

The United Labor ticket put up an aggressive campaign for its candidate for mayor of San Francisco, Redfern Mason, and for other local candidates. A newspaper, The United Peoples Press, was issued at intervals by the United Labor Campaign Committee.

More than seventy A.F. of L. locals in Detroit supported the campaign of the United Labor Committee to elect Maurice Sugar, noted labor lawyer, to the Common Council. In the primaries Sugar ran tenth receiving 18,000 votes. Since nine were to be elected to the Council in the final elections, Sugar needed only slight additional support in the run-off to assure his election. Much of Sugar's support has been drawn from Negro organizations.

IT is noticeable that the Labor Party has been organized first in those industrial centers where bitter labor struggles have taken place. In Toledo, the workers remember the strikebreaking acts of local and state officials of the two old parties in calling out police and national guard to shoot down pickets in the Toledo auto-accessories and general strikes. The workers of San Francisco saw how last year Mayor Rossi and Governor Merriam ordered out police and troops, who killed strikers and conducted brutal raids on workers' headquarters and homes. In Connecticut, the lessons of the strikebreaking role of the New Deal and local old party officials in the general textile strike and the Hartford Colt firearms strike, have sunk deep into the workers' consciousness.

The platforms of these local Labor Parties vary in some particulars. But they are all based on the fact that the workers see the need of protecting their civil liberties and the necessity to halt the unemployment crisis and the employers' wage-cutting drive. In

San Francisco, where vigilantes roam, tar-ringing and feathering union organizers, where strikes have been murderously suppressed, the struggle for civil liberties, against fascist terror and for the repeal of the criminal syndicalism law, are perhaps the principal demands of the Labor Party forces.

The demand for the right to strike, to picket, to organize and for free speech and assemblage is common to the programs of all of these labor parties. The Detroit labor ticket has a series of demands for unemployment insurance and more adequate relief, for the thirty-hour week and improvement in working conditions and compensation laws; for prohibition of the blacklist, spies, armed guards and other forms of terror against workers; for all civil rights for workers; for equal rights for Negroes; against high taxes on workers and against the high cost of living. The other platforms contain similar demands.

These local Labor Parties, now crystallizing will play an important part in the formation of the National Labor Party. As Francis Gorman, vice-president of the United Textile Workers Union said to me a few days ago: "The Labor Party must grow locally before a National Labor Party is launched. The program of these local labor parties must include the immediate economic demands of the workers, small business men and farmers in that locality. For instance, the question of real unemployment insurance is a vital issue, not only locally, but nationally. The question of lower utility rates, lower taxes on smaller incomes and much higher taxes for the higher income brackets, are demands which are both national and local in scope. Municipal hospitals and genuine low-cost housing plans are of the same nature. Thus we find that though the programs of the local labor parties will be based on local needs, the issues raised will be, for the most part, of national significance. In this way a national cohesion will naturally be given to the Labor Party movement."

The rapid growth of the Farm-Labor Party movement, particularly in the unions and also among the farmers, Negro organizations and among professional people, brings well within the scope of possibility the running of national Farmer-Labor party candidates in the 1936 election campaign.

The choice placed before the people of voting for either the Republican party of Hoover or the New Deal of Roosevelt in 1936 is not satisfactory. The masses are disillusioned with both. They want a party of their own.

The growth of the Labor Party movement was registered at the American Federation of Labor convention, recently concluded in

Atlantic City. Although no roll-call vote was taken, the Labor Party advocates were known to have mustered support of one hundred delegates with 5,000 votes, representing 50,000 A.F. of L. members. This, of course, is only a small fraction of the Labor Party's strength in the A.F. of L. Hundreds of local unions in Internationals whose delegates at Atlantic City opposed the Labor Party, have gone on record in its favor.

The rising sentiment for a Labor Party can, of course, be attributed to the failure of the N.R.A. and the New Deal to keep any of its promises. There are still eleven million unemployed. Real wages have declined. The use of fascist terror to break strikes has become a usual custom of the two old parties. The outbreak of the European war brings closer home the danger that the parties of big business will once more plunge the American workers into a new world war. Civil liberties are being threatened.

In interviewing A.F. of L. leaders and hearing their speeches at Atlantic City, I have been impressed by the large number who, through personal experiences, have reached common conclusion that the only way American labor can prevent fascism and check still further lowering of living standards is the formation of a Labor Party. In ever larger numbers, they are losing hope in the two old parties.

Isadore Nagler, delegate from the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union, for example, told the A.F. of L. convention:

"I have never been affiliated with any political party. I have adhered to the policy of the A.F. of L., of rewarding friends and defeating enemies of labor. It is a matter of record that I supported the election of Honorable Herbert Lehman as governor, a Democrat. I have also advocated the election of our present mayor, F. H. LaGuardia, who is a Fusion-Republican. And yet, there are a great many like myself, in all parts of the country, who are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the non-partisan policy.

"There are governors, Democratic governors in the North and South and Republican governors as well, who have sent militia into strikes and who have broken these strikes. There are Democratic and Republican judges who have issued injunctions in strikes to help break these strikes. There are Democratic and Republican mayors who have used the police in strikes in an effort to break these strikes. It is this bi-partisan combination of the legislatures, the executives and the judiciary which are being used against labor and the masses. And in self defense, in justified resentment against this combination, in a determination to secure justice, labor bodies are coming out for a labor party. There is always a Johnny Raskob or an Owen D. Young in the Democratic Party or an Andy Mellon in the Republican Party to call a halt. It is these bourbons of industry and finance who compel the president of the

United States to declare a 'breathing spell'; it is these men who compel congress to knuckle under and become the servant, not of the suffering people, but of the exploiting industrialists and financiers. More and more labor will be put on the defensive. Less and less money will be given to the unemployed."

Nagler argued for the passage of the resolution of the I.L.G.W.U. which called upon the Executive Council to study the question. But his conclusion that the A.F. of L. must organize the Labor Party was unmistakably clear. Nagler said, "The great A.F. of L., as the spokesman of labor and the masses, must answer the Youngs and the Mellons, must throw the challenge into the teeth of big business, and say: Labor will organize its political strength. It will not traffic with the agents of big business. Labor will not merely lobby for measures. Labor will put its own party into the field with its own program, with its own candidates, financed and controlled in every respect by labor..."

THE realization that the workers are being plunged ever deeper into poverty by the two old parties, acting as agents of big business, is also the mainspring of the strong Labor Party movement in Connecticut. This month the Connecticut Federation of Labor begins a referendum in all A.F. of L. locals on the question of formation of a Labor Party.

The president of the Hartford Central Labor Union, William Keuhnel, a member of the Colt Firearms local and a delegate from that local to the A.F. of L. convention, told me some of the reasons why the Connecticut workers are demanding a labor party. "Especially in the eastern part of the state," Keuhnel who was a leader of the Colt strike, said, "there is a network of metal and munitions plants in which the wages of the employes in no way correspond to the tremendous profits of the employers."

The non-ferrous metal industry, Keuhnel said, is dominated by the American Brass Co., a subsidiary of the Anaconda Copper Co., which in turn is a subsidiary of Standard Oil. "The metal workers of my state labor for low wages although they create high profits in the interests of Standard Oil and the Rockefeller family. Wages are generally low, constant speedup increases the output per man hour and rising living costs constantly decrease the real wages of this vast army in a basic industry.

"The workers of Connecticut, and of Rhode Island and other New England States, have reached the conclusion that organization on the industrial field is not enough to enable them to meet the constant drive of the employers and their agents in political office against living and social standards. Rhode Island is one of the states most strictly controlled through the old rotten-borough system, in the interests of the Republican Party and the employers which it represents. The textile workers there have decided against the

old non-partisan policy of the A.F. of L. The convention of the Rhode Island State Federation of Labor just adjourned and the United Textile Workers union have gone on record for a Labor Party.

"The policy of rewarding friends and punishing enemies in the two old parties is the most fertile source of corruption in the American labor movement. The voice of the overwhelming majority of the workers of Connecticut and Rhode Island has been raised on behalf of independent political action of labor."

Francis Gorman was one with these other active members of the A.F. of L. in saying that he, like thousands of others, has no more hope that the New Deal will work. Gorman, like other progressives, warned the A.F. of L. convention that "Your alternative is a plunge into fascism." Gorman, in his convention speech, exhaustively analyzed the New Deal, using government figures and showing that whereas profits have increased, wages have gone down, unemployment has remained and the cost of living has gone up.

This is the statement Gorman gave me when I interviewed him a few days ago:

"They will try to tell us that we can achieve our constitutional and civil rights through further cavilling to the two old political parties, the Republican and Democratic parties. But we have learned through bitter experience that this is not so. For the two major political parties are financially and morally bound to the very interests most bitterly opposing us—to the American Liberty League, to the United States Chamber of Commerce, to the American Manufacturers Association and to all other boss groups who are right now prosecuting with renewed ferocity the attack on the living and working standards of the American workers. We must not forget for one minute that whether or not our President is a sincere believer in the rights of the working man is of little consequence in the face of the overwhelming odds he is up against. He cannot, under the present political and economic machinery, be elected president of the United States without the moral and financial support of the bitterest of all the employer groups—the largest banks and corporations. Therefore our labor party must be kept always entirely separate from control, domination or even suggestion from any person or group having any connection whatsoever with those capital interests which we as workers must uncompromisingly oppose."

Gorman cited numerous instances of use of national guard to break strikes. These troops and the police, were sent out by the Republican and Democratic party officials. "We see, therefore," said Gorman, "That we are not living under the democracy which our forefathers thought they were giving us. We are, on the contrary, living under an autocracy, with the control in the hands of a few powerful corporations and financial in-

stitutions. Our only recourse, in the face of such odds, is the immediate development of a strong, courageous, uncompromising and militant labor party, the basis of which is the organized labor movement and the program of which are the needs and demands of the workers and other bankrupt sections of our country."

Gorman believes that the Labor Party should include all workers and farmers and small business people, "regardless of religious creed or political affiliation." It should be based, he believes, on the trade unions. He draws a distinction between a "third" party and a Labor Party. "We must never confuse our labor party movement with a third party movement," he says. "To do so is to misunderstand the very principles upon which the Labor Party must be built. For we do not contemplate a third party, in other words a third capitalist party—we contemplate a SECOND party, pledged to the support of the working-class interests as against all other interests of minority financial and industrial groups. We must work to include within our scope those workers now belonging to the third party movements, for our party must include ALL workers. But in so doing we must never for one minute confuse the principles and aims of our movement with those of the leaders of third party movements. They are not pure working-class aims; they are hopelessly confused by compromise with the interests of the manufacturers and bankers. And we have learned that the interests of the working class are in the long run, diametrically opposed to the interests of the powerful financial and industrial interests."

THE danger of fascism in the United States is great, Gorman believes. "It is the duty of liberal people" he says, "to point out just what fascism really is, what it has meant in Europe and what it really would mean to the people of this country. . . . Only through sticking together to fight this menace can it be successfully staved off. We look with grave apprehension and understanding to our brothers in Europe. We know that the same fate awaits us if we do not prepare for it now. We know that, because we are the victims of the same sort of economic system which prevails in the fascist countries of Europe and that out of the very nature of this system must arise the necessity for a dictatorship of industrialists and financiers. It is the only way they can continue to maintain their profits at the expense of the workers under the decaying economic order we have today. Therefore the local labor party programs must contain a provision for the militant coalitions of the working classes and other oppressed classes against fascism."

Only a year ago Francis Gorman had faith in the New Deal. Gorman, in settling the general textile strike placed the textile workers' demands before the Winant Board and other Roosevelt Boards. He felt that the workers would make some gains through the good offices of Roosevelt and the New

Deal. Now Gorman, like thousands of others, declares that the New Deal has not settled anything.

These A.F. of L. leaders, voice the desire of the masses of members in their unions for a break with the time-honored policy of endorsement of the two old parties of the employers. The farmers, too, are bankrupt and are turning toward political action together with the workers, independent of the employers' parties. The professionals and so-called white-collar workers look across at Germany and Italy and see that writers, artists and professionals who have had the slightest independence of thought, who dared to be true to their ideas, are either in their

graves or in fascist concentration camps. They see the alternative of fascism in the peoples front to preserve civil liberties and decent living conditions and to fight the towering tide of reaction.

The necessity of combatting hunger, the menace of fascism and the war danger, and the successful examples of local labor parties, are turning the eyes of the masses toward the development of a broad, national Farmer-Labor movement. The task of every enemy of bestial fascism now, is to develop this unity of the workers, farmers and "middle-class," so that national Farmer-Labor candidates can be put into the field in 1934 and can be swept into office.

Correspondence

"Squaring The Circle"

Dear Friend Stanley Burnshaw:

Had you written to Comrade Katayev five years ago you might have saved yourself and Michael Gold a great deal of trouble. But you did not. As a matter of fact I doubt that you have sent the letter of October 29!

Naturally I am aware of certain necessary considerations in reviewing the play because of Eugene Lyons' connection with it. And I further realize that you have indicated a kind word for the production and the director although it lies buried in the mass of your five full columns; not buried so deep that it can't be found but deep enough so that only your ardent reader might find it.

Of course we know that actually the so-called "critical explosion" mentioned in your review is only a Fifth of July fire-cracker. As this world goes today no seismograph will record it. But what does disturb me is that you have seen fit to use the line "as dwarfed and repulsive a child as ever walked the stage" to disregard the feelings of another human being who happens to have been born a midget. I don't ask you to be sentimental but do be a little easy with the ax, my friend.

Then too, in your own words you accept the sympathetic intent of Dmitri Ostrov and certainly the march to Lenin's "Smelo Tovarich" is no work of a counter-revolutionary. And yet for all his efforts to present in the Broadway commercial theater a sympathetic picture you lump him with those you consider dangerous to your cause, instead of being thankful that he did direct the play and not Willie Hearst or some Liberty Leaguer.

Furthermore, having consulted the original, how in all fairness could you fail to state that Ostrov's adaptation had introduced other sympathetic elements besides the march and carefully avoided the hunger-baiting charges of Michael Gold by cutting out many of Katayev's own reference to food and hunger, feeling that the intent might be misunderstood?

Does not the fact that Vasya turns on the electric light flooding the room with the best form of illumination used today, give you an answer to the line about the match? And is it really so important?

As an actor who has looked with great sympathy on the work of theaters of social protest in this country and with great interest in the accomplishment of the Soviet theater, I am sorry that in my first letter to THE NEW MASSES, to have to state an objection to the critics of the Left who are usually right. Or maybe Russky Golos is working; or maybe Robert Benchley "don't know from nothing" about proper or impropergander.

ALBERT VAN DEKKER.

[The controversy about *Squaring the Circle* will be further aired in a critical symposium following a special performance of the play, on Thursday

evening, November 21, at the Lyceum Theater. The symposium is sponsored by THE NEW MASSES and New Theater. The speakers will include Michael Gold, Stanley Burnshaw, Herbert Kline, editor of New Theater, and Dmitri Ostrov, director of *Squaring the Circle*. An advertisement appears elsewhere in this issue and further details will be published next week.—THE EDITORS.]

Letters in Brief

For the first time Norman Thomas and Earl Browder will meet in public discussion when they debate "Which road for American workers—Socialist or Communist?" we are informed by THE Socialist Call under whose auspices the debate will be held. The event will be held at Madison Square Garden on Wednesday evening, November 27.

Hitlerism which discriminates against racial minorities is a reality not only in Germany but in America. Deaderick F. Jenkins writes from Los Angeles. Mr. Jenkins took the test for typist in Los Angeles for placement on a relief project. The head of the branch commented on the excellence of Mr. Jenkins' performance. But when Mr. Jenkins was assigned to the office of a doctor, he was rejected because he was a Negro. Several other employers responded in like manner. Finally, Mr. Jenkins received work from the director of the project. And, he adds, "Nothing will save America until even the environment is changed, as that is what determines one's thinking. Communism is the only hope for the world and I am willing to die for its on-coming."

High-school principals in Chicago have been instructed to throw out all radicals, R. Kayser of that city informs us. William J. Bogan, superintendent of schools has ordered principals "to keep a close watch over those who attempt acts subversive to school discipline and democratic government." This is obviously directed against the anti-war and liberal organizations among the students. But these groups continue their fight despite threats and often the violence of classmates egged on by reactionary school officials.

Under the auspices of the John Reed Clubs, American artists are collecting works of art for the museum in the first Jewish autonomous territory of Biro-Bidjan in the Soviet Union. All artists are cordially invited to send in paintings, water colors, sculpture, black and white to the Art Committee, c/o ICOR, 799 Broadway, New York City, not later than Nov. 15.

Victor Gregory calls our attention to the fact that a Committee For Aid of Victims of Terror in Rumanian has been in existence for more than a year. The address is P. O. Box 55, Varick St. Station, New York City.

Nov. 11, Armistice Day • Mecca Temple

BEGINS PROMPTLY AT 8:30 P. M.

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Loren Miller, Chairman

Reserved tickets at 35c, 55c, 83c, \$1.10 and \$1.65 (including tax) are now on sale at:
New Masses, 31 East 27th St. (Orders filled by mail and telephone: CAledonia 5-3076)
Workers' Bookshop, 50 East 13th Street Rand Bookstore, 7 East 15th Street
Columbia Bookstore, 2960 Broadway Mid-Town Bookshop, 112 W. 44th Street
Putnam Bookstore, 2 West 45th Street Peoples Bookstore, 140 Second Avenue



REVIEW AND COMMENT

The Real South

A SIGN FOR CAIN, by Grace Lumpkin.
Lee Furman, Inc. \$2.50.

GRACE LUMPKIN is one revolutionary writer who knows what it is all about. She has understanding: a Marxian understanding of social forces integrated with a novelist's understanding of human beings. One feels that some of our writers are constantly shying away from certain topics because they don't know enough about them. They shape their books to avoid their inadequacies. Given their limitations, this is intelligent procedure, but it would be better if the limitations were not given. Grace Lumpkin does not have to evade because she knows.

A Sign for Cain is the most revealing book about the South, fiction or non-fiction, I have ever read. It makes everything I, a northerner, know about southern life hang together. It takes the kind of events that are not quite credible when I read about them in the newspapers and it makes them real. More than that, it gives substance and credibility to the people who shape such events. It not only shows why, in Marxian terms, these people do these things; it shows how they feel about doing them, how they interpret them to themselves. The Marxian explanation emerges from the human explanation. And that, of course, is the way it ought to be with revolutionary writers.

Here, for example, is the southern gentleman, Colonel Gault, neither a fool nor a hypocrite, a helpless old man with the dignity and the ludicrousness of one whose life is measured by outworn values. And here are his children, in whom the bankruptcy of southern agrarianism becomes apparent. His son Charles maintains the fiction of the landowner's code by escaping from both agriculture and business to the church, but at the cost of abysmal hypocrisy. Jim Gault, faced with the actual direction of the estate, has a harder time. He does not "take care of his nigras" because he can't and maintain his position as a gentleman. In fact, even though the Negroes get infested meal and go unpaid, Jim is short of money. Hopeless, he takes to drink and women. The foundation of the old way of life has been destroyed.

And all the young Southerners of good family are just as surely trapped as Charles and Jim Gault. Their sister Caroline, though she has lived in New York and written novels, cannot see outside the system in which she was bred, and her liberal phrases become disgusting nonsense when tested by events. The nice young gentlemen, the Byrds, Bells and Allisons, who egg Jim

Gault on to his second murder, are actually fighting with their backs to the wall. Only Bill Duncan escapes the spiritual doom of his generation, for only Bill makes a clean break, joining the Communist Party, aligning himself with the poor farmers and sharecroppers.

Grace Lumpkin makes abundantly clear that the only hope for the South lies in such men as Bill Duncan and his allies. There is no hope, certainly, in the Gaults or in the white hangers-on, Sheriff Harrison and his brutal deputies, Ross Sellers and his gang of lynchers, men who will do anything to preserve their little share of the profits of exploitation. But Dennis, the young Negro who returns to become an underground organizer and is killed for his Communism as surely as if he had been beheaded by a Nazi ax, is a builder of a new order. In such scenes as the meeting in Nancy's cabin, the prevention of the first lynching attempt and the preparations for the mass funeral, Miss Lumpkin, without exaggerating the actual power of the revolutionary forces in the South, gives an overwhelming sense of their potentialities.

A Sign for Cain is a fine novel. Like *To Make My Bread*, it is solid, real and true — humanly, poetically and sociologically true. It is broader than *To Make My*

Bread, swifter in its movement, more dramatic. The only possible criticism is of the characterization. Miss Lumpkin's selection of detail seems too rigorous. That is to say, she gives us nothing except what is strictly relevant to the progress of her story. The result is that, though the characters undoubtedly existed in her imagination as three-dimensional human beings, they sometimes come out a little flat on paper. The reader tends to think of them too much in terms of their functions. The characters of a great novel take on life outside the covers of the book. Some of Miss Lumpkin's people do this, but not all, and there is no character in the novel, I think, so memorable as Bonny in *To Make My Bread*.

This is a not unimportant point, but it does not alter my conviction that *A Sign for Cain* belongs with the finest work in contemporary American fiction. It belongs with Conroy's *The Disinherited*, Cantwell's *Land of Plenty*, Farrell's *Judgment Day* and Josephine Herbst's *The Executioner Waits*, faulty books all, but with the stuff of great literature in them. They not merely give us American life as it really is; they are alive with a spirit that bourgeois literature once had but long since lost. The power that pulsates in *A Sign for Cain* is the power of the working class, awake at last and marching to victory.

GRANVILLE HICKS.

Pirandello Didn't Know Him

MR. ARISTOTLE, by Ignazio Silone, translated from the Italian by Samuel Putnam, New York. Robert M. McBride and Co. \$2.

A FEW days before Luigi Pirandello returned to Italy, I went to interview him at his hotel, hoping that by speaking to him in his own language I could get some direct information about the status of Italian literature. Before I was able to get to him, I was interviewed by his watchdog secretary, who apparently was anxious to find out what my intentions were. He gave me a long and rapid lecture which dealt mainly with "those dirty Communists" who had interviewed Il Maestro a few weeks before; and then warned me not to discuss politics.

My interview with Pirandello wasn't nearly as spicy. I couldn't get him to express himself on any subject that wasn't innocuous. Any minute I expected him to tell me what he thought of the Empire State building, the Statue of Liberty and American girls. My style was further cramped by his secretary who, having forgotten to investigate my intentions in his great anxiety to tell me of his, sat

in on the talk and would break into the conversation whenever I tried to steer it to some intelligent topic. If I had spent the same amount of time with my iceman, I daresay I could have found out more about Italian literature than I did from this Nobel prize man.

However, I managed to learn one rather amazing fact from him: Pirandello, the father and mother (and, in a pinch, the son) of modern literature, has never heard of Ignazio Silone. If I had heard Theodore Dreiser profess ignorance of Erskine Caldwell, I could not have been more shocked. While it is true that Silone is an exile from fascist Italy and his writings are never allowed to cross the borders, his novel *Fontamara* was translated into fourteen different languages and earned the author a reputation on the continent which, outside of the Soviet Union, is only equalled by such a revolutionary writer as André Malraux. When we consider the state of literature in a nation where it is actually treason to write a good novel, perhaps there is no cause for amazement. Be it as it may, Pirandello's ignorance of Silone indicates that Italy has been more subtle than Germany in

her suppression of intelligent books. Instead of making a bonfire of them, she has simply buried them, leaving no obituaries.

It is easy to understand the uneasiness with which Italian censorship regards a writer like Silone. He writes with a simplicity and freshness of language that wins him large audiences wherever his books are published, particularly among workers. His prose is not literary; it is literature. In his newly-published book of short stories, *Mr. Aristotle*, as in *Fontamara*, you are aware of a natural and leisurely tempo that reminds you of farmers gabbing in front of a general store. Silone uses bits of transition and description sparingly, only enough to make the story flow smoothly. The stories are told in a strange sort of multiple monologue in which the whole spirit of the peasants and the soil has its brooding overtones. As you listen to the peasant characters and see them in action, you feel, with startling awakening, the predicaments of a class which, despite its natural goodness and naivete, is driven to absurdities and to crimes by a system that is trying to reduce them to beasts.

As one critic has pointed out Silone's genius has two divergent channels, which may be traced to the combination of peasant and professional-class blood in his veins. On one hand, he is a true peasant bard, a teller of simple tales of the people. On the other hand, he is an intellectual who can see clearly the plight and frustration of the peasant living under fascism. Out of this combination pathos emerges as the most dominant quality of his writings. He is a fine satirist, probably the best writing in fiction today. His razor-blade wit cuts through the tissues of fascism with enjoyable ease. But the strength of his satire lies not so much in its sharpness as in the deep love and sorrow he has for the members of his class.

"Simplico," one of the short stories in this

collection, is a good illustration of the sympathy he has for his characters and the hatred he feels for the forces that tend to crush them. The narrative deals with the natural unrest that exists in a typical Italian village. Accident makes a fool a hero and he almost becomes the leader of a general revolt. The simplicity of the villagers, their eagerness to follow someone who can show them the way out of their troubles are amusing and pathetic at the same time. The revolt they plan comes to nothing but the author has clearly demonstrated how anxiously the silent, tongueless mass of the peasantry waits for an opportune time and leader to come along.

More than any other short story in this volume "A Trip to Paris" is told in the same sharp and powerful mood of *Fontamara*. Beniamino, a young man who has tired of the meager wages and food of Fontamara, decides to go elsewhere, believing that he will be able to escape the poverty and injustice of his home-town. He has a hectic time in Rome, where the only job he can get is shooting at demonstrators and finally returns to Fontamara, realizing that all of Italy is suffering from the same disease. "The Trap" is one of the few stories I have ever liked that has a moral to it. It is built around a Swiss-Italian anti-fascist who made the mistake of being too hospitable to an enemy. "Mr. Aristotle," the title story of the book and "Joy the Weeper" are shrewd and penetrating character studies of two typical inhabitants of an

Italian village. The former is a professional letter writer; the latter a professional mourner. Both thunder against the society they live in, because it has lessened their standing. In these two upholders of the old order Silone ridicules the false national heritage which fascists are glorifying.

As in *Fontamara*, Silone's characters are, for the most part, peasants who are politically unconscious. Their rebelliousness springs from their refusal to submit to a system calculated to degrade them. Silone rarely writes of the sizeable groups of militant, politically-aware Italians that are to be found everywhere in Italy, ready to lead the peasants and workers to a dictatorship of the proletariat when the proper times comes. His writings, however, definitely suggest the presence of such elements, as well as the pathetic eagerness of the politically-immature peasants to ally themselves with them.

Although this book of short stories naturally lacks the cumulative effect of *Fontamara* it indicates a wider range than Silone has formerly been given credit for. *Fontamara* was not a mere happy accident. And, whatever Silone's political affiliations may be, these stories give us some idea of the literary heights a revolutionary writer can scale.

Samuel Putnam has done an excellent translation. He has retained the distinctive flavor of Silone's prose and, what is equally difficult, made natural American idioms out of difficult Italianisms. JAY GERLANDO.

Lindbergh's Classmate

TEST PILOT, by Jimmy Collins. Doubleday, Doran and Co., Inc. \$1.25.

THEY said of Jimmy Collins that he was "more at home, more comfortable, more at peace with himself and the world in the air than he was on the ground." They called him one of the ten best pilots in America. Lindbergh and he learned to fly at the same time; each distinguished himself in his own branch of flying. But Jimmy Collins had an added distinction: he was a Communist, a man who believed that the outworn social order in which he lived should be changed so that the vast majority of Americans could lead fuller and better lives.

It is a slow, arduous process to become a Communist. The logic of revolutionary theory is clear enough to anyone willing to examine it with an open mind—that is not the difficulty. The emotional barriers must be broken down: "It is hard living down the tempers we are born with."

Jimmy Collins underwent a long struggle before he considered himself a Communist. He had first to overcome his desire to escape into romantic adventure. A worker, born in the Middle West, proud of his American tradition, Collins wanted to believe in the society that existed about him, wanted to fit into the contemporary scene and find it good. But as a young man he worked in the Good-year Rubber Factory in his home town of

Akron, Ohio; he found that his family and his friends, all the people about him, were not able to grow or to work out their lives with freedom. There were no "breaks" for the vast majority; it was a matter of earning enough to eat, anyway, anyhow—and the earning of it took all the energy, all the hope and joy and zest for life out of men and made them into automatons. Years later, Collins was about to apply for a job in the Ford factory. He watched the men, remembered the three years in the rubber plant at Akron and went away without applying. "These men impressed me as things, not men," he wrote. "Horribly identical things, degraded, hopeless, lifeless units of some grotesque machine. I felt my identity and my self-respect oozing out of me. . . . I watched the men file into the factory. I shuddered across the street. I caught the next car back in town."

He was young and he ran away. He had tried to escape from his own conclusions for so long. In school, during the year at college: "Always I had a dream. I cannot tell you what that dream was. I can only tell you that flying was one of its symbols. Even when I was very young that was true. Even as long as I can remember. When I became older, it became even more true. So deep a dream, so great a passion, could not be renied. Finally, I did fly . . ."

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The Army taught him. He became a highly skilled pilot. And he made money at his profession. Sometimes it was hard to get jobs, sometimes money ran low—but then he could always turn to test piloting—he could take new planes fifteen thousand feet in the air and dive with them, as fast as they would go, to test their strength, pulling them out of the dive, repeating, ascertaining whether or not the ship could stand the strain. If it couldn't—but that is how Collins died on March 22, 1935, when a plane wrenched apart and he plunged with it to earth.

It was dangerous. "It's a sap's game," he once told a friend, "but starvation is dangerous, too." He could have remained in the Army—but he was reading many books and had come to think of himself as a socialist. The Army, he decided, was no place for a man with his convictions. In the commercial field, flying was still in its experimental stage. He had jobs with the Department of Commerce, with the Curtis Flying Service, with private owners. And there was always test piloting when he was unable to get other positions.

He made a living, a good one. Tall, blond, strong, out of the Middle West, he kept on insisting that life had meaning. It was not economic despair that led Collins to Communism; it was an optimism, a belief that change was necessary. He remembered the factories. He read, searched: "The question of what to do about it kept arising in my mind." Preaching wasn't enough—and steadfastly he resisted the idea of accepting revolutionary theory.

But step by step—I stubbornly fought all the way—the beautifully clear logic of Communism broke down all my barriers, and I was forced to admit to myself that the Bolsheviks had the only complete and effective answer to the riddle of the world I lived in.

He joined the Communist Party. He began to organize his fellows at the flying field, "to meet the needs of the workers as a whole in the industry." His discharge as pilot for a wealthy man was no surprise; but Collins had a wife and two children to support. He

would do some more test piloting—until something else turned up. His contract called for the testing of a Navy bomber-fighter. Twelve flights—he would quit when that was over. But on the twelfth test the ship broke under the strain. . . .

Collins liked to write. He had a simple, straightforward style, at times capable of lyric beauty. His book, *Test Pilot*, compiled since his death, contains stray pieces, anecdotes, accounts of experiences as a pilot, the superb description of test flights. It is the document of a skilled worker, but for the most part it lacks class-conscious connotations. It is the writing of a man fascinated by his job, a man who wrote what he saw just as he had experienced it.

But the important idea developing in Collins' mind was the urgency of clarifying revolutionary thought to other workers. He planned a book that would explain the Communist approach in simple terms. He would answer questions which had formerly confused him; he would talk to his fellows in his own words which they would understand. For Collins felt that the American worker must be reeducated:

I am an American. I am also a worker.

I have always known I was an American. . . . But I have not always known that I was a worker. That fact wasn't stressed very much. I was not openly taught I was a worker, but I was, in some subtle sort of way, taught that workers ought to be ashamed of themselves for being workers. . . .

Jimmy Collins is dead. He was still in the formative period of revolutionary activity. When the wing of the plane that he was testing crumbled in mid-air, the American working class lost a writer who had finally found himself in the revolutionary movement and who promised to become an important factor in leading workers toward the struggle that will, in Collins' words:

Help us build worlds,
New worlds
Better worlds
On earth
Worlds for us.

BRUCE MINTON.

Dream-World Art

AFTER PICASSO, by James Thrall Soby, Hartford; Edwin Valentine Mitchell, New York; Dodd, Mead & Company. Illustrated with 61 full-page plates. \$3.

NOT so many years ago Paris was the hothouse of culture. Many synthetic plants flourished there with tropical prodigality; many healthy growths blossomed in that soil. Today Paris is barren. All that remains are melancholy excrescences, former masters who have lost their grip and a tradition of aesthetic nihilism. It is with this post-Picasso art that Mr. Soby deals, in the main, and the artistic currents which gave rise to it.

Mr. Soby has done a much-needed job and

done it well, even brilliantly. His conclusions within his own terms are solid: what is lacking are the social premises and corollaries.

"Art as architecture" formed the basis of the larger current of modern painting after the Cubist explosion of Braque and Picasso had blown to bits the directionless gropings of the Fauves and self-expressionists. In Mr. Soby's words "Cubism gave painting the greatest housecleaning it had ever had." The plastic ensemble was the important thing for Picasso's generation. Today the current of painting has split into two main streams, the Neo-Romantic and the Surrealist. These trends are indebted to Picasso's Blue and Rose periods and his *papier collés* and so still exhibit their unredeemed bondage to the mas-

ter. It is for these reasons that Mr. Soby, very aptly, calls his book "After Picasso."

The Neo-Romantics, Berard, Tchelitchev, Berman, Tonny and Leonide, chafing under the ordered principles of the Poussin-Cézanne-Picasso tradition, proclaimed the fact that they were primarily poets interested in sentiment. Their pictures are heavy with a deep dissatisfaction, the narcissistic self-pity of spiritual exiles. Sombre colors predominate, blues and grays in particular. A faded twilight pervades their pictures, where defeated figures of indeterminate sex haunt dark corners or sleep in heavily blanketed beds. Differences of a stylistic nature exist among the Neo-Romantics, but fundamentally they betray the same attitude of despair before the oppressiveness of social reality and the same yearning for a luxurious and irresponsible world. This anti-social attitude has the effect of paralyzing their grip on reality. As a consequence, their feeling for pigment and form suffers and the net result is an emotional blob.

The Surrealists are more interesting. They concern themselves with the subconscious mind, where the psyche is cellophaned from the infection of everyday existence. By suppressing the conscious mind, by expressing the dream, the Surrealists try to get at the "marvelous." But for people living in a dream world, the Surrealists manage to keep a sharp eye cocked for business.

Salvador Dali receives special treatment in what is probably Mr. Soby's finest bit of analysis. Most sensational of the younger Surrealists, Dali has given a "new objectivity" to the subconscious gropings of his older confrères. Dali wants to arrive at the subconscious also, but he does not grope for it. He arrives at the dream via the bridge of a conscious paranoia. He goes deliberately mad. Monomania becomes the basis for an aesthetic.

In the Surrealists, the watchword of *individualism*, the battle cry of the once revolutionary bourgeoisie, is reduced to its absurdity. The socially-minded, affirmative individualism of the Renaissance masters winds up as the anti-social, hysterical hyper-individualism of weak souls, who look upon the dream as a sanctuary. Significantly Dali's symbols of life, "excrement, blood and putrefaction," are also the symbols of death.

JACOB KAINEN.

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A Marxist Looks at His Humanist Past

MARGUERITE OF NAVARRE by Samuel Putnam. Coward McCann, Inc. \$3.50.

TO THE NEW MASSES:

You will doubtless receive in due course an editorial copy of my *Marguerite of Navarre*. I can pretend to no prominence in the field of Marxist literature and accordingly do not mean to imply that I or my book are of any special importance to NEW MASSES readers. It is possible, however, that in this case the conditions having to do with the book's publication and the author's attitude toward his own work of some four or five years ago, when he sees it in print today, may be of more general interest as showing what may happen to a writer in times like these.

Let me first get out of the way the facts having to do with chronology and publication; after which, as one who slowly, painfully and with numerous flounderings has progressed from the classic humanist tradition to an acceptance of the Marxist ideology, I should like, if there is space, to take a brief glance at certain aspects of the Renaissance which I now as a Marxist perceive I have overlooked, understressed or misinterpreted in my book.

The manuscript of the *Marguerite* was turned in to the publisher in 1931, although the work was practically finished in 1930. There was a delay in publication. When I learned the book was to be brought out this fall, I asked to be allowed to write a foreword. One paragraph of that foreword the publisher did not see fit to print. It ran as follows:

My work on the *Marguerite* was completed some four years ago. For reasons which need not be gone into here, publication of the book was deferred. A man who is alive, especially in times like these, must find his thinking undergoing considerable change in the course of four years. Such has been the case with me. I am now interested in the Renaissance that lies ahead infinitely more than in the one that lies behind. Needless to say, the present book is not the one I should write today; my very vocabulary would be different now. Which is not to say that the reader may not like better the one that is here handed him. In any event, I decided against any rewriting of any sort; for I discovered that such tampering would destroy the one quality the volume may possess namely, its *immersion* in the period treated. I therefore let it stand as a record. I have asked the publisher to be permitted to make this statement, feeling that it was my due.

The *Marguerite of Navarre* is a natural outgrowth of more than fifteen years of pleasant, studious wanderings in the Renaissance age. As I have hinted in the paragraph just quoted, its best quality is its immersion in that age. From the point of view of the latest Renaissance scholarship (the Jourda-Lefranc school), it is quite orthodox. An outstanding defect—and this is true of humanist-liberal scholarship in general—is that it sees the Renaissance as coming from above, the typically Gallic conception of a filtering-down process, from the

élite to the masses, without a fundamental grasp of social-economic leavens. For one thing, the influence of Renaissance Platonism is overestimated; my view of Platonism would be quite a different one today. And my vocabulary in dealing with royalty and the church would of course be different. Marguerite was a liberal by instinct, with a liberalism that was muddled by an attempt to mix Platonism and a new-born Protestant Christianity. Her liberalism, as I point out in the book, was confined to the religious plane, politically and socially, she looked upon the people, as she did upon herself in relation to her kingly brother, as subjects who had duties rather than rights. The short of it is, and this too the book brings out, while the revolt against the tyranny of the Church was on, the effective revolution against the feudal state was yet to come.

The worst fault of all that I have to find with my book, and it is a grave one, one that is exceedingly distasteful to me now, is that it views too enchantedly the early-Renaissance surface glitter of Francis I.'s reign without seeing down through to the

misery of the masses over which all the tinsel glamor, not of royalty alone but of intellect, was flung. This should have been the book's thesis. It will be the thesis of any others—I have in mind at least two more—that I shall write on the period. During the past four years, in addition to trying to understand the world of decaying capitalism and a putrefying bourgeois culture round about me, I have been continuing and deepening my Renaissance studies. I have been investigating, for example, the revolt of the fourteenth-century Florentine wool-carders or Ciompi. I have been looking at the deceived proletarian element in a nascent Protestantism. I have been tracing the growth and persecution of Renaissance atheism. I am now trying to find out more about the peasant uprising in Francis I.'s time. Etc., etc.

To repeat, I can recommend my book, in so far as it goes, for the picture it gives from the angle at which the shot was made. The angle was a bad one. I'll take a better one next time. I've discovered one thing. You can be just as cock-eyed on the subject of the Renaissance as you can on the New Deal.

SAMUEL PUTNAM.

Wells Shapes the Future

THINGS TO COME, by H. G. Wells. Macmillan. \$1.50.

WELLS was right when he said, apropos of his one conversation with Lenin that "our minds were tuned in different keys." Lenin's mind was tuned to the Twentieth, Wells' to the Nineteenth Century. The greatest outlier of our time is too deeply rooted in a past era to free himself completely from its limitations, although it would be uncritical to minimize the value of his lifelong crusade against the trinity of God, King and Owner. He inherits a superficial optimism; he retains a mystical faith in Progress; he hopes that Science and Education will automatically produce, in some uncertain future, the World-State. His political position is indefinable; it is an awkward compromise between Fabianism and Marxism. He accepts what the Webbs have called "the inevitability of gradualness," and at the same time claims, without justifying the claim, that "gradualness" does not mean "slow." He indulges the luxurious dream of a world federation in which war and economic exploitation will be forever impossible; but he is reluctant to face the struggle put up by nationalism and wealth to keep that world from coming into being. His World-State, reminds us that H. G. Wells has, "a brain good for outlines."

Things To Come does not add to Wells' stature either as a thinker or as an artist. Whether it is the needle that is being blunted or the record that is being grooved, the fact is that the old refrain sounds more blurred with every repetition. This time

Wells' genius for popularization—and it is a genius, by the way, which ought to excite the envy, and perhaps the imitation, of all revolutionary journalists—has found expression in a film based on the material in *The Shape of Things to Come*. The story is simple enough once the reader agrees to suppress common-sense and gets used to the idea of wiping out generations of men with a rather irresponsible abandon. The next World War destroys civilization; there follows an era of barbarism and pestilence ruled by gangster chieftains, small fascist fry; finally, the World-Federation, under the leadership of the few surviving scientists and aviators, is victorious. The final conflict is the struggle between Reason and Romanticism, personified by Oswald Cabal, head of the world council, and Theotocopulos, the poet and artist.

Wells is primarily interested in the physical conquest of the universe; the war and the civilization which it demolishes merely form the prologue. It is hard to escape the feeling that the prologue offers much more exciting material for dramatic development than that world of hypothetical improbabilities with which the movie is concerned. One does not mind so much the fact that Wells is "escaping" into the future, just as so many of his contemporaries are seeking a refuge in the past; but it is artistically shocking to be dipped for a swift moment in the hot reality of imperialist war in the prologue and then plunged directly into the chilly illusion of time and space. In this sense too, Wells and Lenin were tuned in different keys: Wells to infinity, Lenin to history.

WALTER RALSTON.

The Theater

Announcing an American Peoples' Theater

FOR those to whom the phrase, "an American peoples' theater," seems but a remote and faint hope the reports of the October regional conference of the New Theater League in Chicago and New York City will be exciting news. Attended by delegates from over one hundred theaters reflecting varying artistic attainments and social viewpoints—from twenty-five states—these conferences hammered out in detail the methods of work for transforming the social theaters into a genuine peoples' theater. Those who despair of the commercial theater today, those who say it is becoming a closet art for the few who can afford to pay \$3.30 a seat will be cheered by the program adopted unanimously by the representatives of the social theater. During three long days of ardent discussion the delegates at both conferences took stock of their past work, examined their progress in relation to the entire field of the theater in America today and to the changing social conditions and then determined to set out on a new path to reach far vaster audiences and with a repertory capable of interesting this audience.

To understand why the delegates were so confident in approaching the problem of creating a peoples' theater, one would have to have known personally the men and women present. For the most part the delegates and visitors, no matter in which manner they earn their bread, were ardent theater-workers, imbued with a respect and devotion to the arts and traditions of the theater. But to appreciate the spirit of the conferences you would have to know the pale young delegate who "works in lead" in an automobile plant during the day and who represents the Cleveland Peoples Theater—a group which keeps three mobile companies touring the A.F. of L. unions halls with the popular workers' play, *Union Label*, and which also has a full-time company busy rehearsing a full-length work for early production. You would have to know the sturdy Negro director from Ohio who is doing his master's thesis on the "History of the Workers' Theater" and who fills page after page with notes on the problems of theater organization, repertory, etc. You would have to know the quiet Southern university professor, the tiny girl field-secretary for the New Theater League who hitchhikes from town to town aiding social theaters in establishing themselves—and the distinguished playwright from Mexico who marvels at the development of the new theater in the United States. As one who assisted at both conferences I can report that the trade-union delegates from the shops, the professionals from Broadway, the white collar workers—in fact, all of these representatives of the American people itself—went at the

whole problem of the theater with an intimate knowledge of what was expected of them by the masses of workers and middle class in their communities, in the factories, offices and on the merry-go-rounds of relief.

What is this formula for a peoples' theater? To be sure, it has as yet not been worked out so well that it can be completely defined. But the conferences pointed out that such a theater must present a drama that reflects the immediate personal and collective problems of both the past and present; that such a theater actually fights along with the masses for an extension of democratic rights, for the right to organize in trade-unions, against war, against fascism . . . in brief, for a better, a richer life. How are these abstractly stated aims to be dramatized? Obviously mechanically-stylized plays and plays that run to the over-abused "conversion" pattern, will no longer do. It is rather by plays based on authentic characterization developed against local and national background; plays dealing, in addition to strikes, with love, ambition, fear and hope—plays that will voice the mood and hopes and events in the life of the great masses that work for a wage and demand imperiously to see themselves reflected in competent, convincing drama. Thus the social theater would crawl completely out of its past youthful sectarian shell wherein it had curled not too comfortably, speaking a language that was not its own but rather that of the public platform and the political manual. A renewed application of the drama to the illumination and exposition of the finest revolutionary and labor traditions of the American people will be the first fruits of this directive.

The crux of the whole problem of creating a peoples' theater lies in the development of a broad mass-audience organization. On the basis of years of work the new theaters seek their basic audience today in the trade-unions, in the popular fraternal and mass organizations and in every progressive element in the settlement houses, colleges, churches, Parent-Teachers' clubs, etc.—in fact among all groups opposed to war and fascism. To conceive of going forward without organizing such basic support irrespective of party, race and creed would be impossible.

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The delegates have returned to their homes in Boston and Philadelphia and Baltimore, to Minneapolis, Toledo and Des Moines. Much of the work of the conferences cannot even be hinted at in the present paper. But we cannot fail to mention that concrete steps have already been taken to coordinate the hundreds of member theaters with their national office and to make their publication, *New Theatre*, a leading force in every theatrical development in America.

MARK MARVIN.

Current Theater

Let Freedom Ring (Broadhurst Theater). Opening Nov. 6, this dramatization by Albert Bein of Grace Lumpkin's famous novel *To Make My Bread* promises to be one of the most important productions of the year. Sets by Mordecai Gorelick. Tickets as low as 55 cents. To be reviewed next week.

Squaring the Circle (Lyceum Theater). Katayev's play of self-criticism called "the Soviet *Abie's Irish Rose*" in an adaptation by Dmitri Ostrov. Acted with fine and warm enthusiasm, the present (revised) production should delight friends of the U.S.S.R. and warm the hearts of "neutrals"—despite a few of its remaining innuendoes. A critical symposium sponsored by New Masses and New Theater will follow the Nov. 21 production of this play which continues to be a subject of controversy.

Porgy and Bess (Alvin Theater). Operatic version of *Porgy*. A succession of colorful revival scenes purporting to illumine life in Catfish Row. Indifferent music by George Gershwin. Excellent acting and singing (by Duncan Allen and Anne Brown particularly) prevents boredom in what is not the great American folk opera.

Winterset (Martin Beck Theater). Impressive poetic drama by Maxwell Anderson, who has treated the same general Sacco-Vanzetti theme before. Aware of the legal frame-up and the forces moti-

"The changes from the original play do not alter its general tone."—RUSSKY GOLOS.

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vating class justice, Anderson deliberately turns away from these facts to preach a kind of universal defeatism. Nevertheless, within this warped framework there is much power, passion and memorable beauty. Acting and direction are extraordinary.

There's Wisdom in Women (Cort Theater). Clever acting by Walter Pidgeon and Ruth Weston in Kesserling's treatment of the shopworn tale of the woman wise enough to sacrifice her career because her husband needs her.

On Stage (Mansfield Theater). A playwright falls asleep, dreams he's a character in his own play. Excellent acting (Osgood Perkins, Selena Royle, Claudia Morgan).

Mulatto (Vanderbilt Theater). Langston Hughes' drama of race relations in the deep South, written several years ago. A slightly melodramatic outline of the conflict between an illegitimate mulatto son and his white planter-father. Good intentions and good acting are its strong points.

Blind Alley (Ritz Theatre). A professor of psychology halts the crime wave by psycho-analyzing the master criminal to death. Not for the gun-shy.

A Touch of Brimstone (Golden Theatre). Roland Young's deft and limited comedy talent pitted against a limited and none too deft story. An egotistical producer, a little Napoleon of Broadway, finally gets under his long-suffering wife's skin with his monkey-shines and she leaves him. Whereupon he gives up the Napoleon business, starts out to win her back and leaves the theater, and this particular show, flat.

Art

From Nat Turner to the Moscow Subway

ON the walls of the A.C.A. Gallery (52 West 8th Street, New York) a story is told in pictures. One side of the story is about people who live in America. The other side of the story is about people in the Soviet Union. On one hand the pictures speak of the struggles of man against man. On the other hand, the pictures portray the struggles of man against the forces of nature.

The heroic combat of Negro and white workers against hunger, unemployment, race hatred, fascist vigilantes and war make the pictures of William Siegel's America. The struggle against oppression, from the day of Nat Turner down to a present-day meeting of Negro and white workers in the South is utilized as a rich store of subject matter for his drawings.

In his choice of objects, through which Siegel conveys his ideas, greater selectivity would be desirable. Also greater variety in composing them. The pictures taken singly are satisfying, but the need for variety arises when viewed as component parts of an ex-

hibition. His individual pieces are impressive; William Siegel has a great deal to say.

Albert Abramowitz restricts his pictures to a single phase of Soviet life; even to a single incident: the building of the Moscow subway. Russian workers, men and women, break ground, buttress shafts, mix concrete, work when the sun is high, work at night. Comrades arriving to help in the work, meeting in the shafts to discuss the progress of the work and all make interesting patterns painted in oil, or cut into wood.

Through the pictures by Abramowitz we follow a simple process of labor and we arrive at a victory of man over the forces of nature. The color in the paintings, however, which should be jubilant has too much restraint. The artist's wood cuts are more colorful. The luscious clouds in the print, "The Open Cut," has zest not found in the paintings.

These pictures of two different worlds hanging side by side places this exhibition in a class by itself. HUGO GELLERT.



STRIKE

Linoleum cut by William Siegel.

"The New Gulliver"

ROBERT FORSYTHE

WHEN they started telling me about a new motion picture based on Swift's *Gulliver's Travels* and done with puppets, I said to myself: "I love the Soviet Union, I love every single solitary citizen of that great land, I love the Old Bolsheviks, the ex-Trotskyists, the Young Pioneers and the Dam on the Dneiper, but puppets, marionettes . . . No, by God!"

This is because I have never liked puppets even when they were good. I haven't liked them whether done by Tony Sarg, the Yale Puppeteers or the Italian . . . what's the name . . . Piccoli? I was once dragged to the Italian puppets in Chinatown and found them the most boring thing in the world next to a book review by Herschel Brickell. Any child of mine who preferred Tony Sarg to Mickey Mouse or James Cagney would be left out of the will and indeed given very little food until he repented.

I can hear the skeptics saying. . . "This is the usual Forsythe trick of building up the opposition to such a point that when he turns about he practically floors the reader with the revelation." I can hear them saying it and they're right. I hate puppets and I think *New Gulliver*, (Cameo) which is done mostly with puppets, is not only great but bordering on the miraculous. The point must be that they're not puppets at all but a new race of human beings. A gentleman named Ptushko has taken several years out of his life and fashioned a set of individuals of such astuteness and discernment that I can think of whole races who would do the world a good turn by retiring and allowing the Ptushko people to take over in their place.

What these incredible Russians have done is take the old story by Swift and return it to its original form as a satire rather than a fable for children. It starts out with a group of Komsomols being rewarded for good behavior or good deeds or something (I saw it before Julian Leigh did the English titles and my knowledge of Russian is so slight that when I once thought I was ordering food in a Third Avenue Russian restaurant I received a very hard look from a waitress and the manager came up and stood menacingly by the table). Among the prizes given the boys is a copy of *Gulliver's Travels*. They go off in a boat for a picnic on a nearby island and when one of the boys starts reading the book aloud, another boy (V. Konstantinov) falls asleep and dreams the Gulliver legend.

He is first engaged in a battle on board ship with the lusty crew, the ship is wrecked,

he is washed ashore and when he awakes he finds himself pinned down by the tiny cables of the Lilliputians and half of the nation sitting on his chest. This is where the real picture begins. Gentlemen, I tell you; you've never seen anything like it! I'm not good on technical matters and I pass on only what I've been told. The puppets aren't on strings; perhaps that's where they've always gone wrong with me before. As I understand it, each motion of all those hundreds of Lilliputians was photographed individually just as is done with the Mickey Mouse cartoons. In any event, there are motor cars with gun turrets, soldiers, pompous officials, innocent passersby.

The scene shifts to the King's palace where His Majesty, looking as charmingly half-witted as Alfonso, is being prompted by his Prime Minister, who is keen enough to allow the royal moron to mouth the phrases while a phonograph (concealed) grinds out the words. But somebody leans

on the record and cracks it, with the result that the needle sticks and keeps repeating the same phrase. The audience of loyal court followers see nothing out of the way in this but the Prime Minister finally gets the thing halted. These scenes and the succeeding ones in Parliament are satire in the grand manner.

What follows is a public entertainment in honor of Gulliver, with an opera singer looking exactly like Bee Lillie burlesquing an English concert-hall queen, with dancers and a culminating conceit by which the Lilliputians, to do their very best for this visitor, trot out *their* company of midgets! It's the biggest laugh I've had in years. I don't want to spoil the picture for you by giving it in detail. The lady who writes for The New Yorker from Paris under the name of Genet was annoyed at the thought of the Russians making a class problem out of the Swiftian fable but she surrendered to the point of saying that "for technical sorcery, for the magic of Ptushko's animated mechani-

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cal actors, the film is astounding, fantastic, an engineer's and technician's delight." This is going rather far for *The New Yorker* but she rounds to in great form by adding, "as a work of art, or even propaganda, it is vexing."

It is perhaps rationalization on my part but I feel that the battle between the workers and the royal nitwits makes the film. There is a great to-do with guns, explosions and advances and retreats in the latter sequences of *New Gulliver* and it keeps the picture alive. I'm afraid Genet hasn't read her Swift in late years. As a matter of plain truth, the Lilliputian episodes wear very thin. After you have the first shock of delight in the transposition of everything from a large scale to the midget scale, nothing much happens until Gulliver walks out and takes the ships in hand. Ptushko, as an artist, must have realized that. If he had been an artist working for the New York Theater Guild he might have taken such liberties as are taken, and successfully, by Alfred Lunt and Lynn Fontanne with Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*. Being a Bolshevik and interested in other problems, he took such liberties as struck him as being important for the audience he was addressing.

But what of it and why the discussion? *The New Gulliver* is a knockout for sheer entertainment and the greatest technical achievement the screen has seen since the early days of David Wark Griffith and the fade out. It has been taken over for American distribution by Oscar Serlin and Joseph Burstyn and the chances are that audiences which have never seen a Russian film will have a chance at this one. If they don't enjoy it, it will be a clear sign that there is nothing left for the United States but one last earthquake and zoop! the country disappears between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans.

The picture comes out of the Moscow Film Studios, is directed by Ptushko, with the puppets made by Sarra Moskil, F. Krasny, puppeteers, and O. Tayezhnaya, sculptor. I mention the names because they deserve it. Michael Blankfort has added American lyrics to the story by G. Roshal and the music of Leb Schwartz.

I've warned you before on *Chapayev* and *Peasants*—great pictures! Add *New Gulliver* to that list.

JOSEPHINE HERBST

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THE ART MART. Art in a furniture store. Exhibits by Louis Ferstadt, Joseph Margulies, Reginald Marsh, Louis Ribak, Harry Sternberg and the three Soyers, among others.

ARTISTS UNION. Still lifes, abstractions and picket lines painted by union artists.

JOHN MARIN (*An American Place*). Rather disappointing paintings in oil, a new medium for America's ablest performer in watercolor.

LE CORBUSIER (*Museum of Modern Art*). Plans, models and photographs of ideal buildings of all types. Most of them still awaiting a socialist society that will be able to build them.

A.C.A. GALLERY. Very literal pictures by Abramowitz in oil and woodcut of the Moscow subway construction form an interesting record of the work on that project. Black-and-whites by William Siegel.

WILLIAM SIEGEL (*A.C.A. Gallery*). Revolutionary art in black and white. Thirty drawings reflecting the class struggle in sound draughtsmanship.

ALBERT P. RYDER (*Kleeman Gallery*). Dark and mysterious moods by an early American. One of the infrequent times that a large amount of the work of this artist is assembled in one place.

VINCENT VAN GOGH (*Museum of Modern Art*). Will probably be remembered as one of the high spots of the current season. Includes many of the little known paintings of workers done in his early period.

ABRAHAM RATTNER (*Julian Levy Gallery*). A young American from Paris shows how gaiety may be brought to cubism.

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Between Ourselves

Moissaye J. Olgin, editor of *The Morning Freiheit*, writes in next week's issue on Earl Browder's *Communism in the United States*.

Ruth Crawford, of Terre Haute, Ind., home town of Eugene V. Debs, has written "There Lived a Man in Our Town," which will appear next week.

Thus far twenty-five artists have accepted our invitation to contribute to the next quarterly issue, which will appear Dec. 17. The matter is anti-fascism; the approach, !.

The subscription department has been feeling the need of a little stimulation of its own recently, with the daily of subscriptions as readers hastened under the wire before subscription prices went up on Nov. 7.

Advance sale of tickets for the first symposium being held by The New Masses Forum, at Mecca Temple on Armistice Day, indicates a crowded house. The speakers will be Heywood Broun, Earl Browder, Gen. Smedley Butler and Prof. Harry Elmer Barnes, on the subject "Can We Stay Out of the Next War?" Loren Miller will preside.

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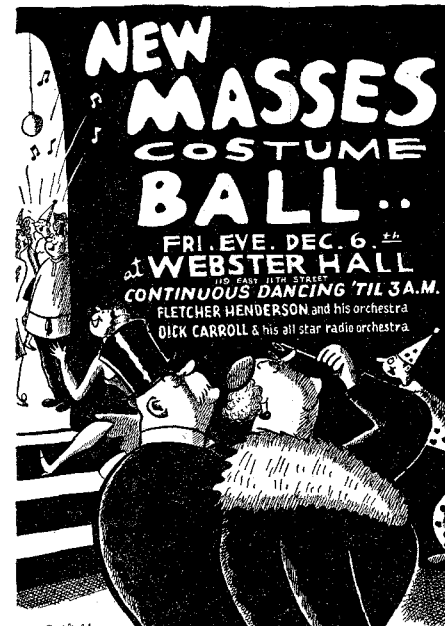
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